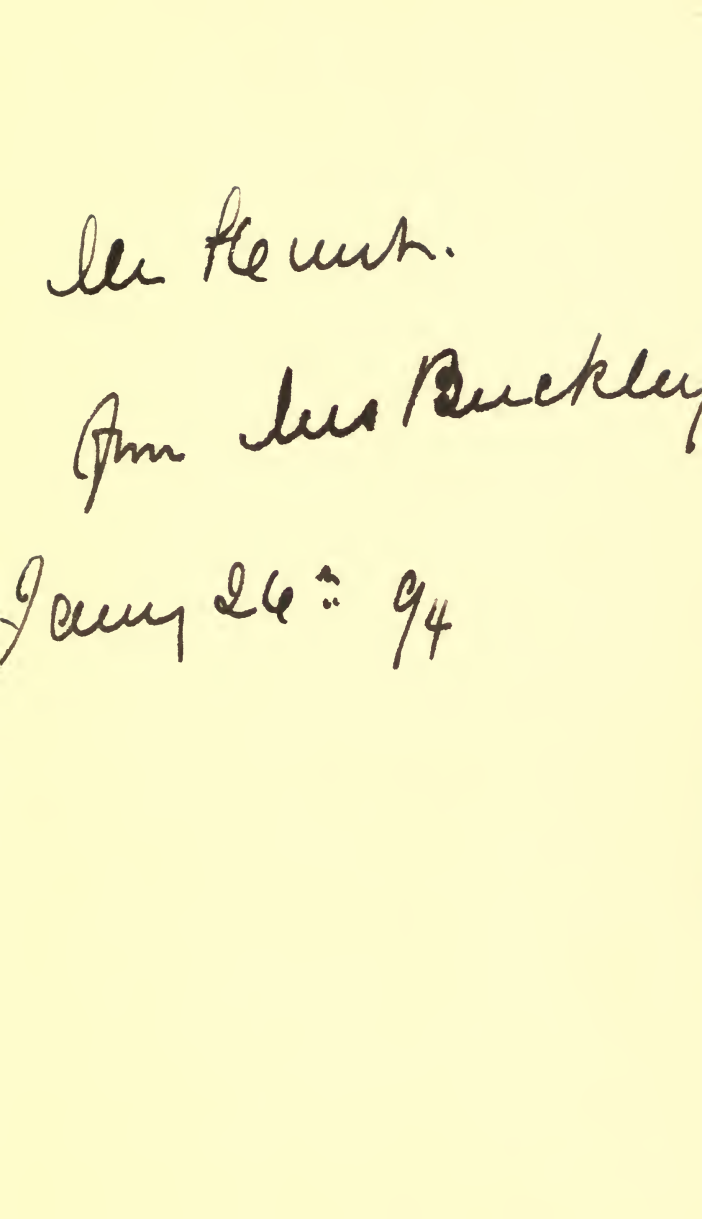

WINDFALLS OF OBSERVATION

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GATHERED FOR

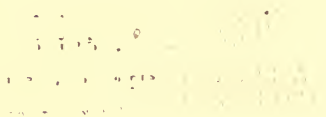
THE EDIFICATION OF THE YOUNG

AND THE

SOLACE OF OTHERS

BY

EDWARD SANDFORD MARTIN



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CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	Horse	1
II.	Climate	15
III.	Courtship	25
IV.	Marriage and Divorce	49
V.	College	65
VI.	The Tyranny of Things	89
VII.	Wills and Heirs	107
VIII.	The Travel Habit	117
IX.	Newspapers and People	133
X.	The Mysteries of Life	147
XI.	Missing Senses and New Ones	165
XII.	A Serious Time of Life	181
XIII.	The Question of an Occupation	193
XIV.	Women and Families	213
XV.	As to Death	229
XVI.	Inclinations and Character	237

225826

PAGE

XVII. A Poet and Not Ashamed 249

XVIII. Some Christmas Sentiments 261

XIX. Feathers of Lost Birds 275

XX. Outrageous Fortune 283

XXI. Certain Individual Views of Major Brace 295

I

HORSE

HORSE

SPEAKING for the State of New York and contiguous vicinities, it is perfectly safe to say that if there were six weeks that could be spared out of the year without doing it any harm, they would be the six weeks beginning on the first Monday in March. They make us a lenten quarantine that we have to keep whether we like it or not. The real, true spring and May-day are put upon the market in these latitudes at about the same time. Spring threatens sporadically and intermittently as early as the middle of April, but so long as it yields two sprigs of pneumonia to one of arbutus it is hardly worth talking about as spring. When base-ball becomes a marketable sport, and one's flannels have been oppressive three days running, then we may begin to believe

In the spring

that there really is a spring and that we are in it.

a young man's fancy

It has been said by a favorite author that at this time of year a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love. That may have been so in other climes and times, but contemporary observation hereabouts persuades the observer that what our young men's fancies turn to in May, and as much as to anything else, is horse. When the town begins to warm, and the mud is known to have dried on the country roads, the desire to go on or after a quadruped begins to wrestle in many minds with the other reasonable desires that cost money, and in a certain percentage of minds, every year, horse prevails.

A lover, even a successful one, is an affecting sight to any one with due appreciation of the chances he is taking; but only to a man who is ignorant of the possibilities of horse-flesh, is a lover half so affecting as a young man who is buying his first horse. There is so much that he does not know, and it will cost him such a pretty penny to learn it!

Still, though a little knowledge of horse is a dangerously expensive thing, if one can afford to acquire it, it is a knowledge that has only one superior in its power to add to one's intelligent interest in life. The noblest study of mankind is man, as heretofore ; but the study of horse is gloriously supplementary thereto. It is worth a reasonable bit out of one's surplus in the glad, hopeful spring, to get in the way of learning how many things a horse may have the matter with him and still be able to get about. There are so very many of them ! more than even with the worst luck the beginner can hope to learn in one season, for a single horse does not have them all ; certainly not in any one summer. A horse's blemishes are like virtues, in that they have to be developed ; but the beginner may assure himself that the less he knows about horse the more blemishes he will be able to develop, so that his ignorance and his opportunities of curing it will go hand in hand. Craniology is a very interesting study, but the bumps on your head

turns to horse.

come ready-made, or grow out so very slowly that you cannot note their progress. With the bumps on a horse's legs it is different. If the horse is young enough, and the country is hilly, or the carriage heavy, or if your notions of driving or riding are a little crude, a notable lot of knobs will sometimes accumulate on a set of legs almost while you are looking. It is as interesting to watch them as it is to see the seeds come up in the garden after a warm rain.

Collectors

There have been men who have held that there was a greater measure of pure felicity in being a collector than in addiction to horse. The collector's hobby has two excellent qualities: It is immensely entertaining and it is comparatively innocent. It tempts men to extravagance, no doubt, but if they buy wisely they get their money back when they sell. It gives no man headaches in the morning; nor does it seriously interfere with the peace of families, so that it is more tolerable than rum or flirtation. It is a less hazardous pleas-

ure, too, than horse, which sometimes inveigles men into saddles to the peril of necks, and which usually, if pursued with due zeal, usurps their faculties to a degree that is detrimental to the interests of society. Collectors are usually more interested in their treasures than in anything else on earth, but it must be said for them that the very depth of their passion usually operates to give it modesty. They are not more apt to prate endlessly in mixed society about their havings than a lover is to talk about his sweetheart. The consciousness of possession is ordinarily enough for them, though, of course, when they get among persons whose sympathy they know is with them, conversation takes its natural course.

not so bad as

There is a reasonable fraction of human sentiment left in most collectors, but the man whose hobby is horse has a very limited claim to rank as a biped. Books and pictures and jades and "solid colors," when once you have got them, stay calmly where they are put and leave their owners some peace. Not so

the horse. Nothing compares with him for intrusiveness except babies. He is constantly up to some devilment, developing possibilities or impossibilities, getting colds, ringbones, spavins, nails in his feet, strains, curbs, galls, scratches, navicular disease, corns, lung difficulties, heaves, and unascertained worthlessness. Every detriment that shows in him shows immediately in his owner, whose mind is temporarily unfit for the consideration of anything else. The collector can take his first editions out and dust them and put them back on the shelf, and go out and talk about silver-coinage; but a man who has horse seldom comes out of his stable without the preoccupied air, which is the external sign of internal worry. Laws designed for the protection of society, provide, with more or less success, that men shall have but one wife each, at a time. But strangely enough, the number of horses a man may possess is left unlimited, except by his purse and his preferences, so that any citizen is at liberty to own as many as he can main-

horse enthusiasts.

tain, and go about with dimmed and distorted faculties, to prey upon the patience of his fellow-men.

If there were no other drawback to the horse habit, a respectable argument (albeit not a strictly valid one) could be reared against it on the ground that it necessitates the continued existence of horse-dealers. Now the business of horse-dealing, an avocation of large and increasing importance, is yet of such peculiar characteristics as to be distinctly hazardous to the reputation of people who take it up. That there are and always have been honest horse-dealers it is absurd to doubt, but the immemorial experience of mankind in buying horses is such that demonstrated examples of absolute integrity in selling them excite very much the same sort of admiration as white plumage on blackbirds. Of course there is a dearth of absolutely honest men anyway, but the reputed scarcity of honest horse-dealers cannot be entirely due to that. There are dishonest grocers, but it cannot be

Hazards and trials of the horse-dealing business.

said that the grocery business is disreputable. Such a statement is hardly justifiable even of the business of dealing in stocks, and if it can be made of horse-selling there must be special reasons for it.

There are such reasons, and very good ones. They consist largely in the circumstance that two extremely uncertain quantities enter into every sale of horses. One of these is the horse, the other is the purchaser. From the day he is foaled to the day his hoofs go to the glue-factory, every horse is, in a considerable measure, a matter of opinion. There is no absolute certainty what he will do until he has done it, and then there is no absolute certainty what he will do next time. A man under optimistic influences may see a thousand dollars' worth of value in a horse, and sell him next day in a pessimistic mood for three hundred, and all without any variation in the animal or in the state of the market, or anything else except the owner's feelings. A horse-dealer of the sincerest integrity may sell for a

large sum a horse which gave every indication of value. Within a week or a month the horse may develop an incurable ailment which makes him worthless. Nine times out of ten the inexperienced purchaser believes that the dealer cheated him, and an upright man endures the imputation of being dishonest as a penalty for dealing in wares that are subject to sudden fluctuations of value. Of course, the temptations of horse-dealing are enormously increased by this liability of seemingly sound horses to go suddenly and unreasonably wrong. Of course, too, a good many dealers yield in greater or less measure to the stress of these temptations. Thus one reason why the reputation of the business is so doubtful is that so many men who go into it too readily convince themselves that *caveat emptor* applies as properly to the vendor's representations as to the wares. But another reason is that it is so difficult for even a very Bayard of horse-dealers to avoid the imputation of cheating which he did not do.

But that the reputations of honest men are apt to be impaired in horse-dealing is really not the fault of the horse so much as of the other variable quantity, the purchaser. Horses are subject to preventable as well as unforeseen detriment. The more valuable they are, the easier it is to ruin them by misuse or neglect. The dispositions and habits of horses, particularly of young horses, may easily be spoiled in a very little while by the ignorance or spitefulness of grooms. The average horse-buyer knows little about horses, and less about grooms. If he pays a fair sum for a horse, and the animal goes lame or grows vicious, he is apt to assume and to proclaim that he has been cheated. Whereas the mischief may have been wholly unforeseen by the seller, or may all have been done in the buyer's own stable, of the workings of which he has about as much practical knowledge as contemporary scientists have of home life on the planet Mars. Inasmuch as the horse-dealer's business reputation rests very largely on the

buyer's testimony, it is evident that the honest dealer who values his fair fame has got to be almost as careful to whom he sells as what he sells.

Thus we see what an extra-hazardous occupation horse-dealing is, and how many reasons careful men can find for keeping out of it. But as a matter of fact, men never do keep out of the hazardous occupations. There is a recognized charm about uncertainties, and they are never more alluring than when they go on four legs, and haul carts, or jump fences. Men not only sell horses in increasing numbers for profit, but they dabble in the business out of sheer love of adventure and horse, and sell quadrupeds to friend or foe, reckless of the fact that every beast that passes through their hands is a hostage given to society. Such men are the chief instigators of horse-shows, which are useful in stimulating trade, and giving them a chance to show their stock, and, above and beyond that, in educating buyers so that they shall not only desire good horses, but shall know them, and know

what to do with them after they are bought. In the improvement of the horse and the education of the buyer lies the honest horse-dealer's hope. When sound horses stay sound after they are sold, and buyers learn what they may and what they may not expect, virtue in the horse business will be surer of its reward, and honesty will seem more like a policy and less like a quixotic whim.

II

CLIMATE

CLIMATE

A CORRESPONDENT who lately wrote in rather a pessimistic vein from Los Angeles, averred that the monotony of the climate there was a depressing influence. There was not difference enough between the seasons, she said, to give to life that variegated flavor which is so acceptable, and goes so far to prevent the soul's palate from being jaded. When the correspondent's letter had been printed and found its way back whence it came, the local journals immediately denied all in it that was disparaging, and explained that the writer took sad views of life because of disappointment in a transaction in corner-lots. Whether Southern California lacks seasons or not is a question of fact that is best settled on the spot, where daily instances of the

climate may be put in evidence. Probably it doesn't; but if it does, its deficiency is a serious one.

Some remarkable results of physical conditions.

We of New York and New England and the comparatively effete East abuse our climate a good deal, and sometimes with plenty of reason. Professor Shaler has said that "it is rather to the physical conditions of North America than to any primal capacity on the part of its indigenous peoples to take on civilization that we must attribute the failure of indigenous man within its limits to advance beyond the lowest grades of barbarism." No doubt he is right about that. Physical conditions include climate, and North America, the best parts of it, is blessed with what may be termed a rot-you-before-you-are-ripe climate. An indigenous people have never been able to mature in it in a deliberate and thorough manner, but have invariably acquired a precocious, sickly smartness, and perished off the soil, leaving mounds, arrow-heads, embroidered moccasins, and sculptured cities behind them. The climate infuses irre-

sistible energy in the folks that it acts upon, and they ripen too soon. The continent is a sort of forcing-bed. But while it it is impossible for indigenous races to come to much in it, it is possible to get wonderful results from transplantation. Full-grown Englishmen, Dutchmen, and Germans, brought here full of blood and sluggish strength, have been amazingly quickened, and have sometimes made greater progress here in a decade than their brethren at home have made in a century. A special marvel that is apposite is the effect of American air upon the Irish. Almost all of the Irish are well known to be of royal extraction, but at home the stock had fallen into decline. Not only have their abilities in general been notably quickened by sniffing the free American breezes, but in particular it is found that when the Celt sets foot on America's shore an instinct of being boss, which in many cases had slept in his blood for tens of centuries, springs as if by magic into full-sized life, and the long-lost prince drops his hod and steps out a ruler of men.

But the climate is as wearing as it is stimulating. It uses up the materials in an emigrant race presently; and then if the members don't take very good care of themselves, they waste away. Nevertheless, we ought not to forget that whatever its defects are, it is parcelled out to us in excellent variety. It is a vast inconvenience in summer sometimes to have to pick up a sick baby and rush for the seashore or the hills; and in the winter there is pneumonia and the whole family of throat and lung experiences; and in the spring there is the liver. But it is a well-seasoned climate all the same, and where we are not too set upon getting our whole annual experience of it in any one spot, it does as well by us as any climate can be expected to do by people of desires and infirmities such as ours. It is our duty not merely to make the best of it, but to make the most of it. Does the valued and intelligent reader take pains to do that? Does he fully realize that in living in a climate that is seasoned he enjoys opportunities which all people do

The value of seasons.

not have? And is he prepared for industrious and painstaking appreciation commensurate with his chances? Let him consider peoples whose lot is cast in regions where the meteorological vicissitudes are unimportant. Take the good people of Hayti, whose vitals are never frozen up; or the Esquimaux, or Icelanders, who never really get thawed out. Are they over-bright, these worthy folks? Read what Ibsen has found it necessary to write to enlighten the simplicity of his compatriots; inquire as to the experience of Hayti since Toussaint L'Ouverture's revolt; and draw such conclusions as you must as to the usefulness of due alternations of freeze and melt in making men's wits active and promoting their energies. There is said to be foliage in the tropics of a certain sort, great lazy leaves for which the botanists have names; but where there are to be oak or maple leaves, or hickory or beech, the sap must run up the trunk in the spring. Leaves with come-and-go to them, and wood with a snap in it, are not the product of those all-

the-year-round climates. Similarly men. We are the salt of the earth, brethren; and it is to the shifting of our seasons that we owe very much of our savor. And therefore we ought to make it more of a religious duty to get the very most out of our seasons that we can.

Go to meet the spring.

And especially make the most of the spring. It is a trial oftentimes. It makes heavy the heads of men and pains them in the small of their backs; but that is precisely because they neglect it, and take no pains to accommodate themselves to its requirements. For its spirit is exacting in proportion to its value. It is the season of moods, of introspection, retrospection, meditation, procrastination, forecasts; of waiting around for things to begin; of catching the germs of enterprises to be hatched during the summer and launched into activity when the energies recur in the fall. It is a season that men are too much inclined to crowd, and it avenges itself on them for their unwisdom. Do not hurry it! Give it time to work itself out in you! Dawdle a little! If you cannot

get into the woods, get into the parks; and when you cannot get to the parks, saunter on the avenues, and stop long before the flower-shop windows. Go to meet the spring if you can. Go to Washington in April; there you cannot hurry. There you must saunter and dawdle, and invite your soul to make suggestions to you. Go down the Potomac. Sit in the sun in Lafayette Square and listen to things as they grow. There you will hear the identical *lenes susurri* that caught the Horatian ear in the Campus Martius. There there is an atmosphere; there you have sunshine overhead, green grass underfoot, and the past and the present and the future all about you. Get a taste of a Washington spring, if only once; for it will come back to your senses as often as spring itself returns, and as often as it comes you will bless it.

III

COURTSHIP

COURTSHIP

IF any one has his choice about where he shall grow up, let him stipulate for a family in which there are singers. It is a sore pity to grow up where there is no singing. In earlier days an American child's chances were better than now of being born into a reasonably large family; and though in some families all the members have music in them, and in others none, of course the more there are the better the chances of song. Song is almost pure gain. It need not be of very high quality so long as it emanates naturally from inside of the singer, and does him good. Its value as an appurtenance to domestic life lies not in its merit as a performance, but in its success as an expression of the feelings. Singing as a fine art is, of course, worth cultivat-

Song in the household

ing; but the species of song that we are now talking about, is of the same sort as the singing of birds and of negroes. Ordinary, normal children ought to learn it by ear as they do language; and they should sing because they are happy, as the birds do. A child that grows up where there is no singing, no more gets his rights than a young robin that is hatched out in an incubator. The robin is pretty sure to sing when he grows up and is turned loose in the sunshine, whether his ear got any early cultivation or not, for the habit has been strong in the robin family for generations. But if the child does not get his singing instincts developed by example while he is a child, they may stay asleep permanently.

as an accessory to courtship.

It appears that the best singing of birds is performed as an accessory to courtship. Certainly it is that way with humans; and a child whose parents are past the singing age, or have had the song stopped out of their lives by too much cloudy weather, may still have tunes running in his head, and sentiment

percolating through his soul, if only he has an elder sister with a proper string of beaux. Just what the songs of courtship are in this decade, the lovers of this decade best know. A quarter of a century ago there was a set that are still running in the heads of middle-aged people, and that will continue to run in the heads of some of them for a quarter of a century to come.

In that period, as doubtless now, there were songs of encouragement and songs of consolation, songs for the right man who came at the right time, and for the wrong man, and for the right man who came at the wrong time. Particularly there were songs for the right man who came forever too late, after the wrong man had put the bars up and was sitting on top of them with a gun across his knees. The song in these cases came floating through the bars. "I'll hang my harp on a willow-tree," was a prevalent ditty in those days, and a great favorite with the wrong man, as it is bound to be in every generation that it can reach. Another particularly serviceable ballad

was worn smooth in the service of the wrong man, being sung sometimes by the man himself to drown his misery, and again by the maiden, with the design of letting him down as tenderly as possible. It began, "Yes, I know that you once were my lover;" and it ended—some readers may remember it—with this time-honored sentiment:

> "I can love you indeed as a brother,
> But my heart is Jo Hardy's alone."

The tender mercies of the wicked are said to be cruel, and perhaps they are, absolutely speaking. But compared with the tender mercies of the betrothed maiden to the wrong man, they certainly seem less harsh.

One of the songs that used to be sung by the right man twenty-five years ago, was "Kathleen Mavourneen." As often as not they used to sing it together. It is an old song now as songs go, and it is hardly probable that the lovers of this generation often sing it. There must be biggish children who have never heard it. Poor lovers! Poor children! the

middle-aged will say: "It must be hard to have to grow up like that!" Indeed, there was once an incurable enthusiast—he must be middle-aged now—who used to aver that when he got to be rich enough to have what he wanted, he was going to employ a military band, with a solo cornet player, to play "Kathleen Mavourneen" in the garden underneath his window at sunrise every fair morning in the month of June.

So it seems that, although an old song is the synonyme of worthlessness to any one who doesn't know it, with any one who ever really took it in, it passes current always. One and indivisible is a man and the songs he heard when he was young, provided he heard any.

And speaking of the old songs and their associations, what is a man to do about those interesting possibilities that he calls his first loves? I say "possibilities," using the plural (and thereby doing violence, perhaps, to popular prejudice), because of the conviction that experience does not always teach enough,

and that in a good many cases experiences are needed. If there are any agencies which are more usefully instructive than first loves in ripening adolescence into manhood, this deponent knoweth them not, and his ears are erect, and his eyes intent for the catalogue of them.

First loves

By first loves be it understood to include not only that preliminary being who first makes the incipient man aware of a peculiarity in his affections, but all the constellation of beings, more or less angelic, who become the successive guiding stars of his existence, from the time he achieves tailcoats until some woman takes him for better or worse, with all the fruits of a protracted training in him. Of course there are some individual males who find their pole-star at the first essay, and never wobble afterward in their courses. The limited knowledge of men of this sort may prevent them from realizing that their experience is exceptional. They must go to the books to learn what is the common lot of common men, and there is no book

that recalls itself at this moment to which they can go to better purpose than to Edmond About's "Story of an Honest Man." There they will discover, if they need it, how the impact of successive entities upon the affections may hammer them at last into a durable article, graceful to contemplate, and able to stand the wear and tear of a work-a-day life.

Now as to those several entities. Many a man, unlike About's autobiographical hero, feels constrained to regard them as monuments of his own inconstancy and weakness, and either buries his memories of them in unmarked graves, or recalls them shamefacedly and with a very sneaking sort of tenderness. The greater fool he! I miss the proper point of view if such half-hearted sentiments are not mistaken; and if, by entertaining them, he does not needlessly contribute to blot out some of the most charming and interesting oases in all his desert of a past. A lad at college, though college for the time is all the world to him, does not deem it necessary to forget that he was once at school: nor does a

to be cherished always.

man new launched in the real world affect to forget that he was once a part of the microcosm known as college. Indeed, the difficulty often is to make a college man remember anything else. But, by a very prevalent affectation, a married man is supposed to forget that eyes are fine in more than one color, or that other agencies than age or dye have ever been potent to change his views as to the proper hue of hair. The truth is, to be spoken flatly and with confidence that it is the truth, that a man who does not love his first loves all his life long makes a great mistake and does injustice to his own past. But, of course, he is to love them as they were. The affection they inspired in him, when they did inspire it, is a part of himself for all time, and they, as they then seemed, are a part of him too, and it is as idle for him to try to eradicate them from his actuality as for the leopard to attempt to change spots with the Ethiopian. That he should love what they may become with the lapse of years is manifestly inexpedient and unreason-

able, as well as usually improper, if for no other reason, because

"One must not love another's."

There was obviously a corner in Praed's heart where "the ball-room's belle" had permanent lodgings, but obviously, too, he had no special tenderness for "Mrs. Something Rogers," but regarded her, no doubt, with an interest that was always friendly, but never uncomfortably acute, as one is apt to regard the cocoon from which some particularly lovely butterfly has escaped. True always to the butterfly, doubtless Praed disassociated it from Mr. Something Rogers's cocoon. When the fledgling Pendennis loved the Fotheringay, he loved her from his hat to his boot-soles, and don't imagine that he ever succeeded—even if he was fool enough to try—in erasing that lovely image from his memory. The Fotheringay saw the beginning of a habit of woman-worship of which, in due time, Laura reaped the benefit. And there was Genevieve!

What an education she was to Coleridge! And can you imagine that he ever recanted, whatever Mrs. Coleridge's baptismal name may or may not have been!

Men may as well make up their minds —and women, too—that first loves are facts—most respectable and laudable facts, and not shadows; and while they need not be obtruded on a world that is not interested in them, they are neither to be snubbed nor denied, but respectfully entertained and cherished. Of all history, the most instructive to a man is his own. He can keep it to himself, if he will, and oftentimes it is very proper that he should, but he cannot afford to forget any of it. The discreditable parts he must remember as a warning to himself, and the rest, his first loves among them, to encourage him.

One of the parts that will make him blush, when he recalls it, is his callow and dishonest attitude toward that adjunct of courtship, the maiden's natural protector. In a letter announcing that he would visit me, a certain young friend

says : "It is a year since I have had a talk with you, and this is the time of all others when I feel the need of taking counsel with you over certain matters." I daresay the matters that he wants to talk over are not more momentous than whether checked trousers or striped are best suited to the conformation of his maturing legs ; nevertheless, his notice sends a momentary chill down my spine. The trouble is that he is at that unscrupulous age when youths of average sentiment and no definite expectations make no bones at all of falling desperately in love, and appealing to the most available elder to know what to do about it.

Now, he is a fairly prudent lad, and I cannot really believe that he is coming to me with any such audacious confession ; but if he does, my mind is perfectly made up as to what I shall say to him. I shall show no more sympathy for him than if he were an intending burglar meditating on the expediency of breaking into some honest householder's tenement. I shall treat his

case as lightly as if it were measles, callously assuring him that it is a thing to be endured while it lasts, but which calls for no action more fundamental than, possibly, a brief season of retirement from society, followed by a spirited resumption of the ordinary duties of life. One thing in particular I shall insist upon, out of mere reasonable regard for fathers of daughters—a class to which I have recently come to find myself belong. I shall not permit him to attempt any dealings with the individual known to persons in his state as "the old man." He shall not be suffered, if I can help it, to make a conscientious parent accessory in any degree to his callow infatuation. He shall himself bear the burden of his complaint, and the full responsibility of his recovery, and there shall be no bringing down of gray hairs or interruption of parental repose with untimely worriment. It will be time enough for him to tackle the old man when he has prospects, at least, to divulge to him.

"The old man" has some rights.

But all counsellors will not be so con-

siderate as I of the old man's comfort. He will have a lot of bad quarter-hours between now and next spring. It is harvest time for the summer's sowing of flirtation, and before it ends and the crop is all in, too many careful parents will wonder whether they are in truth kind fathers, solicitous for the welfare of their girls, or "bouncers" employed in a matrimonial agency. All the world loves a lover, and is anxious to see him win; but nobody seems to care for the old man, or have a reasonable appreciation of his trials. What is he to do, poor old chap, when Romeo, with a bold front and a heart quaking with conscious malfeasance, discloses that during the prevalence of the last full moon but two, he and Juliet, discovered that they were affinities, and an experience of eight weeks has confirmed them absolutely in that conviction. Being as yet a bachelor of arts not lucrative, Romeo does not feel warranted in asking for an immediate marriage, but feels bound, as a man to whom deception is abhorrent, to put Mr. Capulet in possession of the

facts, and learn the conditions, if any, on which he will assent to his daughter's betrothal. Poor old Capulet! He knows the Montagues; a most respectable but too abundant family, with tastes disproportionately polite to the dimensions of their income. He is aware that Romeo is just out of the college where it strained his father's means to keep him, and has yet to make the first practical demonstration of wage-earning capacity. He has no personal objection to Romeo, but he is perfectly aware that to permit his engagement to Juliet is tantamount to a guarantee that an income shall presently be forthcoming on which they may marry; which income, so far as it is possible to forecast, will have to take the form of periodical checks signed "Hiram Capulet."

It pays to be kind to him.

Poor old Capulet! He doesn't think it fair that honors should be thrust upon him like that. It is too much like holding up his hands at the request of an enterprising brigand. He is not ready to say yes, and knowing that the old man who hesitates is lost, he says no,

politely, but with decision. He will make no conditions or concessions, nor make himself a party to Romeo's schemes in any shape or manner. So Romeo finds himself left on his own hands, with his fortune still to win, and on such terms with old man Capulet as must make it embarrassing for him to sit for any length of time in the moonlight on the Capulet's garden fence. And all his own fault, too. He had only to hold his tongue and go to work, and he might have led the Capulet german next winter, and worn holes in the carpet under that hospitable family's mahogany, both in town and in the country, for several seasons to come—until, indeed, he could broach his project to the old man with reasonable expectation of a welcome. As it is, of course, he isn't necessarily beaten, but he has got an unnecessary set-back, and all because he would try to shift the responsibility of his own enterprise on to shoulders where it did not belong. And not only has he damaged his own cause, but he has inflicted on the old man a very dis-

agreeable job, which he had not deserved, and which probably made him hate himself for half the night and all the next day.

My counsel-seeker shall do no such thing as that. He may adore Juliet from her hat-pin to her heels just as much and just as long as she will let him, and he may impart to her such discreet intimation of his sentiments as he thinks it profitable to disclose and she to hear; but upon the old man he shall not intrude until affairs are in such a state that his consent has become merely a felicitous incident of an inevitable event. It is not the young fellow that wants his girl that the old man respects, but the man who is ready to take her. The story is familiar (and, doubtless, autobiographical) of the eminent American humorist who, having made up his mind that it was time to speak, approached the old man, inquiring, "Judge, have you noticed anything going on between Miss Lizzie and me?" And getting a negative response, retorted, "Well, Judge, look sharp and you will." The

eminent humorist's method was rather more abrupt than I should recommend, but it showed the right spirit, such as can only be shown by the right man at the right time. If my young friend should prove to have reached a crisis of this sort, and is not ready to meet it in just such a spirit, I shall recommend him to lie low; and if he feels that he must tackle the old man now, to take counsel of a recent comic paper and do it by letter, anonymously.

Long engagements.

And further, as to courtship:—Owing to the complications of modern life, and the large increase in the list of creature comforts which polite people have come to regard as necessaries, marriage has become a vastly more serious undertaking than it used to be, and is deferred until a later period of life. People in cities who have been used to wear good clothes, and to have servants to wait on them, and to go out of town in summer, no longer marry when the girl is eighteen and the man twenty-two. The man is apt to be nearing thirty before his in-

come will stand the matrimonial strain, and the maid is proportionately experienced. It would not be quite accurate to say that, though it is harder to get married than it was, it is as easy as ever to become engaged. That would not be quite true. The difficulty of getting income enough to marry does defer, and even prevent, a great many betrothals; nevertheless, engagements do often happen when the prospect of marriage is remote, and a reasonable percentage of them last until marriage ends them. Long engagements are not popular, but enough of them are running to make the behavior of their beneficiaries a fit subject for comment in the interest of human happiness.

Now, society's attitude toward lovers is favorable, but lovers make a serious mistake when they presume too far on the strength of the world's traditional regard for them. The polite world loves its lovers exactly so long as they are interesting and agreeable. When they cease to be so, its sentiments toward them take the form of anxiety to have

them married, which may indeed be so extreme as to result in practical efforts to put them in the way of pairing, but which is more apt to take the form of what is vulgarly known as the cold shoulder. Lovers who are intelligent, and who are disposed to make themselves agreeable, ought to be exceptionally charming. They are enveloped in a pleasant blaze of sentiment which makes them interesting. So long as they are nice, all kind people are in a conspiracy to indulge them and make them think that life is lurid with rose-tints. Their politeness is the more appreciated because it is thought to involve especial self-sacrifice, and whatever they do for the community's amusement is rated above its ordinary value because they have done it.

Behavior proper thereto.

All the worse, then, when lovers regard themselves as temporarily exempt from the ordinary obligations of politeness, and abandon themselves to spooning and mutual absorption. The sort of courtship that goes on for hours behind closed doors, that insists upon seclusion

and resents a third person, that thinks first of the beloved object and not at all of anyone else—this may do for a six-weeks' intermission between maidenhood and marriage; but long engagements should be conducted on radically different lines. Was there ever a dearer sweetheart than Lorna Doone, whose maidenly reserve allowed John Ridd one kiss a day, and no spooning whatever? And do you remember Mary Garth, so true to her not-any-too-eligible Fred, and yet so strait and strict with herself? Engaged or not, she must surely have been a welcome companion in any house, Fred or no Fred. And, again, that dame in silver-gray who married John Halifax—be sure that her betrothal was a modest and unselfish one.

Lace yourself straitly, Mistress Lucy, and encourage Colin to understand that while you stay under the paternal roof the obligations of that shelter are on you, and forbid you to concentrate all your courtesy on a single guest. It will be time enough to be engrossed and ex-

clusive when the parson has given you his blessing; and having a roof of your own, you may properly decide whom it shall shelter, and what shall be the measure of its hospitality.

IV

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

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BUT it is a perversion of diligence to formulate standards of behavior for engaged persons, if it is true, as divers otherwise unemployed persons insist, that the institution of holy matrimony is on its last legs. The idea that marriage is getting out of date has become so familiar since Mona Caird slipped its leash some years ago, that it no longer startles. It has settled down into a subject for regular discussion, like the Behring Sea difficulty, or coinage, or the alleged misrule in American cities. A recent writer in the *Westminster Review* produced official statistics, from England, France, Germany, and the United States, to show that the matrimonial habit was losing its hold; and in a late *North American* Mrs. Wells

Is marriage played out?

gave so many good reasons why more girls do not marry as to make a reader wonder why any girl should ever marry at all, unless sentenced to do so by a court of law.

Mona Caird's plan.

Tolstoi insists that the whole institution is rotten and sinful ; but Tolstoi is so palpably hipped that his anathemas are hardly profitable to discuss. Mona Caird's theories it is at least possible to consider. She does not believe in the modification of marriage by petty changes in the laws, nor yet in its abolishment. She believes in marriage by private contract. She thinks that people should be allowed, under gradually lessening restrictions, to make their own marriage bargain, and she believes that they would stick to bargains that they chaffered over for themselves a good deal more successfully than to such as they pick up ready-made. It seems that Mona Caird's marriages would be partnerships terminable according to the conditions of the contract, at proper intervals, or by mutual consent at any time, as other partnerships are. Such is the

elegant diversity of marriage laws already existing in the several States of this Union, that it seems as if her theories might get an approximately fair trial here without any new preliminary legislation. As it is, by selecting the American State in which they chose to be joined, people might be married in different degrees, according to their hopes or confidence in their own characters. Couples who retained doubts of their own stability could be married by justices of the peace in Rhode Island, New Jersey, or Delaware. Those whose hopes were stouter could have a civil marriage in New York, and church marriages could be reserved for people who were really enough in earnest to stand up and solemnly take each other for better or worse, for good and ill. The objections, however, to such a plan are manifold. For one thing, making the best of a marriage is a form of discipline that is often of the highest value to the character; but few people would be at much pains to improve themselves in just that way if marriage should cease to

A bad way.

be even theoretically permanent. But perhaps the most striking objection is that it would so complicate courtship. At present the custom is to get married first, and settle the conditions after the fact. No man and woman discuss like sane beings how much they will marry. Such a discussion would only be possible to two sophisticated humans, endowed, both of them, with such an active sense of humor as would certainly keep them from becoming more than friends. When there is marrying to be done somebody has got to be in the deadest earnest about it. Marriage may result when both parties are in dead earnest, or where one is in earnest and one acquiescent, or where the friends or relatives are in earnest and both the parties are acquiescent. But it may be doubted if people in sufficient command of their wits and their sense of humor to discuss comfortably whether they had better marry at all, and if so for how long and to what extent, are in a state desperate enough to warrant their entering the marriage state at all. *Punch's* advice

was meant for such as they, and they would take it. Courtship, as at present conducted, is as though the man who had gained by persuasive arts a measure of the woman's confidence, led her out to the end of a pier. The water is deep blue, and you can't see the bottom. He invites her to jump in with him, and it depends upon the degree of satisfaction she finds in his company, and her opinion of his ability to fetch her ashore, whether she complies. Mona Caird would have her say: "I will not jump off here, where it is over my head; but if you will come nearer the shore, where the water is not above my knees, perhaps I may jump off with you there; then if we don't like it we can wade ashore." But then the man would say: "No! wading is not swimming. There are plenty of girls who are willing to be sisters to me, but what I am after is a wife."

Everybody knows — everybody, that is, except Mona Caird—that woman is not a good hand at an ante-nuptial bargain. When once she makes up her

mind to jump off the dock with her man, she doesn't care to take soundings. It is sink or swim then, and the deeper the better. Marriage is the bargain the law makes for her. It may be a faulty one, but it is incalculably better than she would make if left to herself. Perhaps she may grow warier as the eons accumulate. Who can tell?

Divorce.

Meanwhile, contemporary marriage is a bourne from which travellers return with an audacity that many persons regard as not a little scandalous. Critics of divorce and divorced persons, however, show an increasing disposition to cleave to the general in their censure, and avoid the particular. Easy or frivolous divorce is condemned and deplored, but the easily divorced are not excluded from the politest society, nor do they seem to find much difficulty about remating with people who are understood to put a high value on their respectability.

There seems to be no particular use in squeezing the divorce laws up any tighter, unless public opinion will back up the squeeze. It isn't law that con-

trols the actions of the average citizen so much as the opinion of that citizen's fellows. There is much in contemporary experience that favors the belief that if divorce were more difficult, a good many people who were exceptionally addicted to each other's company, but could not legally marry, would live together without marriage if society were complaisant enough to condone it. It is easier still to believe that neither statute nor public opinion will keep people together who really want to separate. The surest hope for the survival of the marriage relation is based upon the conviction of intelligent people that continuous marriages are the best, and that divorce at best is a confession that the judgment has been mistaken in a vital matter, or that affections that were formally warranted to hold have fetched loose. However easy the laws may become, or whatever complaisance polite society may achieve, divorce, with all its privileges and possibilities, must continue to be a second-rate bliss by no means comparable to true marriage.

Special marriage laws for players.

One innovation, however, might reasonably be introduced. It must be apparent to anyone who will take the trouble to read a column of current dramatic gossip in any newspaper, that there ought to be a special marriage law for players. While some persons of the histrionic profession stay married a good while, there is no denying that the average of domestic infelicity in that profession is exceedingly high, and that an exorbitantly large number of married actors and actresses make application first or last to be unmarried. One can't go to a play without realizing that this tendency toward a variegated domesticity is a natural outgrowth of play-acting. Our minds, it is true, control our actions, but our actions, conversely, have a reflex influence on our minds, and a gentleman who conscientiously comports himself on the stage as the husband or lover of successive charming ladies, is not to be over-much blamed if matrimonial change becomes a second nature to him, and he flits from flower to flower in real life as he does in his profession.

It seems odd enough, sometimes, that players should marry at all ; but it will be remembered that marriages wind up every play, and the actor's professional experience strengthens rather than diminishes his prejudice in favor of a conventional ceremony with a priest and a ring. It is the artist that marries, not the man ; but the artist and the man being inseparable in the law's eye, the man is held bound by the artist's action, and has to go to trouble and expense, and sometimes wait long and make distant journeys, before he can go free. It doesn't seem quite right that it should be that way. If a man has the artistic temperament, and the public encourages him to cultivate it by going to see him act, it seems mean and unreasonable to subject him to the same sort of matrimonial legislation as if he had had the domestic temperament to begin with, and had never been encouraged to do anything to break it up. Something ought to be done about it, but the State legislatures have adjourned again without doing it.

Polygamy as a remedy.

It is too soon yet, but if ever it is settled that marriage as it is won't do, and that something must be done about it, some strong and persuasive arguments may be made in favor of a reinstatement of polygamy. The basis of the contemporary matrimonial decline, as most writers interpret it, is man. Man cannot very well be left out of marriage altogether without defeating some of its more important ends and impairing its results. But he can be modified and etherealized, and of course there would be less of him in a plural marriage than in a dual one. We are told that "in woman's discovery of her ability to be independent, self-supporting, and self-sufficing, and in her wish to work for humanity, and not for one man, her desire for marriage has lessened." It is a pity that her independence should be interfered with, or that it should only be fostered at the cost of her family life. Of course, if she marries a whole man, she may have to be devoted to him uncomfortably; but she might take a half or a third interest in a man without in-

terfering too much with her higher aspirations.

Such polygamy as is here suggested is by no means the same sort of institution as the patriarchs experienced or as the Mormons have lately repudiated, since its design would be, not to increase man's importance, but to abate it. To secure this result it would probably be necessary to reserve to women the initiative in courtship, and the power of nominating new candidates for the family circle, the husband to have a veto power, perhaps, if that should seem desirable. Some interesting consequences might unquestionably spring from such an arrangement. Sisters who were co-heiresses might unite upon a single husband, thereby keeping the undivided estate in the family. Dear girl friends might absolutely refuse to be separated, and decline to marry any man who had not room in his heart and his house for both. So wives who might form close attachments for other women after marriage, could invite their inseparables to share their roof and their husband. This pro-

posed dispensation, too, would operate as a form of co-operation to put within reach of women who are moderately well to do, luxuries which at present are only to be had by the very rich. In this way several American ladies, by lumping their resources, might make such a showing as to win a British duke or a German or Italian prince of a grade such as no one of them could pretend to by herself. Often it happens that a man loves several marriageable women, and the story-tellers even say that several feminine hearts have been known to soften contemporaneously toward the same man. Under an amended marriage law they could all marry him, and all the wear and tear of making a choice and the anguish of blighted affections be avoided. Nor would it be the least advantage of a wisely planned polygamy that it would so change the conditions of courtship that ninety-nine-hundredths of the existing mass of fiction would become obsolete, and leave the field open to a brand-new set of novels with fresh plots.

There may be therapeutic value in a

well-devised polygamy. When dual marriage has been abolished, it might be tried before humanity despairs and resolves to die out.

V

COLLEGE

COLLEGE

WELCOME, Mr. New College Graduate, into the world. It is true of the world, as the "Complete Angler" suggested of the strawberry, that God may have made a better one, but not for our immediate use, for he hasn't put us in it. The world is a good enough place if you play fair and pay attention to the rules. Money is a handy thing in it, but Mr. Carnegie has been saying that you are spoilt already for money-making on a very large scale. He doesn't think your chance of making an eminent business man is as good as it might be if you already had three or four years of shop-boy experience to start with.

Culture vs. acquisition.

Mr. Pardridge, the Chicago plunger who once made a million dollars in a

single day, seems somewhat of Mr. Carnegie's opinion, since he has been quoted as observing that a man's financial success is not always dependent on his education. What Mr. Pardridge calls "education" is more accurately expressed by the word "culture;" for of course a man has got to have education of a very definite quality before he can hope to find any profit in balancing himself on the edge of the Chicago wheat-pit. Education is trained development; and the country-store boy whose mind runs on trading, and who makes gradual progress from peddling mouse-traps to swapping railroads, gets education that is quite as distinct, though probably not as broad, as if he were in special training to become a college president. The thing he usually doesn't get is culture; and Mr. Pardridge is probably right in thinking that the sort of education that gives culture is a factor of no particular importance in most processes of money-making.

But his remark in its inverted form is just as true and just as important, to

wit, that the sort of education that merely results in money-making is of no particular importance in the promotion of culture. A man may get ever so much culture and never get rich ; and a man may get ever so rich and never achieve culture enough to speak polite English, or know good poetry from bad. Now, a money-maker who has no culture is liable to be hard put to it to get his money's worth out of life ; and the upshot of his embarrassments usually is, that not being fitted by education to enjoy the things that give pleasure to cultivated minds, he either takes up with less innocent amusements, or else sticks to business because it is the only thing he likes to do. At best he divides his time between money-making and the cultivation and enjoyment of that wonderfully remunerative animal, the horse. When the money has been made in a business of large speculative possibilities, there are disadvantages about going on, merely for amusement, after one has won enough. Many men could speak eloquently of the disadvantages of being

driven by defective culture to buy and sell wheat for occupation.

And yet it is very awkward, too, to be very long of culture and very short of money. Culture does not make grinding poverty easier to bear, but rather the reverse ; for though it is true that people of the highest culture can be happy on moderate incomes, it is also true that cultivated tastes mean cultivated wants, and an income on which an uncultured person could live happily might be below the minimum indispensable to the comfort of another person whose carefully cultivated wants had become necessities.

Compensating advantages of education.

And that is why I am glad that even as money-makers there is some hope for you new graduates. Suppose it is true, as Mr. Carnegie avers, that you are spoilt already for making great fortunes. A lot of you who are to be doctors and lawyers and editors, and possibly ministers, his disparagements do not affect at all, since you don't expect to make great fortunes anyway, and for the rest of you who are going into business, there is

certainly this for consolation, that even if the sort of education you have got has lessened your chances of becoming millionaires, it has certainly improved your chances of making a reasonable living. It will surprise no one ten or fifteen years from now to find you earning from two to ten thousand a year, but if the century goes out and leaves you driving a street-car in New Orleans, or waiting on table in a San Francisco restaurant, it will be thought remarkable enough to warrant extended notices in half the newspapers in the United States. You see the great majority of college graduates eventually make a fair living, and people are so much in the habit of expecting that they will, that if they do not it makes talk.

Even though you might have been richer if you had never gone to college, your chance of having fun is better as it is. A bachelor of arts who cannot have a better time on five thousand a year than an average self-made millionaire can have on fifty thousand, has misused his time.

One point in particular where you ought to beat the self-made rich, is in the ability you should have already acquired to command playmates. You probably start out with a much better assortment of pals than the average nascent millionaire had at your age, and your chance of affiliating with congenial companions all your life through is better than his ever was. That is one thing that college should have done for you, and another is that it should have helped you to make companions of books.

Pleasant people are the pleasantest thing in the world, and pleasant books are the next pleasantest. Both of these you ought to have learned already to choose and enjoy, and if you have, don't doubt but that your time has been well spent. Professor Everett used to say fifteen years ago—"When Horace says 'beatus' he doesn't mean 'happy,' he means 'rich.' Translate it 'rich.'" We confuse "rich" and "happy" in these days too, but they are not yet quite the same thing.

Mr. Fayerweather's case.

It is a good while since any business man has recorded his opinion of the value of a college education so clearly and so impressively as was done by the late Mr. Fayerweather, the leather merchant, in his will. Mr. Fayerweather was an excellent man of business. He began to earn money very early in life—not from choice, but because he had to. When other lads of his age were at school he was peddling commodities in country villages, and during the years which luckier youths spend in college, he was acquainting himself with the rudiments of the leather business. About the time his college-going contemporaries were beginning their junior year, he got a place in "The Swamp," and in "The Swamp" he continued for the rest of his days.

Men live a long time in "The Swamp." The smell of hides is not altogether pleasing, but it is understood to be wholesome, and it makes for longevity. But Mr. Fayerweather did not dally with hides for his health. He went to "The Swamp" to make money. And he did

make money. He was sagacious and prudent, and worked hard. Moreover he knew all about leather, and leather interested him. He kept his mind on it. When he laid awake nights he did not meditate as to how Julius Cæsar built bridges in Gaul or who wrote Homer's poetry, nor about the chances of this year's football team, nor of any of those things that liberally educated minds dwell upon. He put in his meditation upon leather. Accordingly he prospered in the leather business. When there were dimes to be made in it he carefully garnered those dimes, and when something in particular was up, and dollars were being distributed, he was present and took care that such as were coming to him got into no one else's pocket by mistake. So presently he was well-to-do, and had an income that kept heaping itself up. Then his aggravations began.

For though he knew well enough how to make money, there were dreadful defects in his ability to spend it. He dared not stop working, for he had never learned

to loaf, and the more he worked the more money he made. He travelled a little, but he didn't like it. Neither did he care for horse-racing, nor yachting, nor Scotch moors, nor old Chinese pottery, nor pictures, nor books, nor coaching, nor Ward McAllister, nor orchids. He just liked leather, and next to selling it he liked to buy it. Moreover, having had no chance in his youth to make friends, he had very few old friends, and he was shy of attempting any social experiments, because he knew that society was miscellaneous in its tastes and unlikely to be a comfortable field of enterprise for a modest merchant who was aware that all he knew well was leather. His children, if he had had any, might have learned to have any amount of fun, and to make gratifying holes in his surplus, but as luck would have it he didn't have any children.

So, as the old man sat at his desk in "The Swamp," and saw his income piling up and his thousands running up into millions and salting themselves down, he determined that, so far as lay

in his power, he would take care that what had happened to him should happen less frequently in times to come. So he carved up his fortune into convenient slices, by will, and distributed it around among a dozen or more American colleges, thereby hoping to make education easier for poor boys, and keep them out of such a scrape as he had gotten into himself.

Certainly he chose a wise means to accomplish the worthy end he had in view. That any man who has had fair educational chances in his youth will ever accumulate in trade as great a fortune as Mr. Fayerweather's, is as unlikely as that any college-bred youth would ever find difficulty in having fun with the income of as large a fortune as a Mr. Fayerweather might accumulate. So, by his wise bequests he planned to diffuse a great remedial agent, which works in two ways at once—diminishing men's ability to heap up very great fortunes, and greatly increasing their capacity to get happiness out of small ones.

The new college-graduate is part of

the high-class, raw material of the world ; and yet, we hope for him that he isn't so raw by a good deal as he might be if he had not gone to college. The primary problem with a lad is to teach him to take care of himself. He must presently be turned loose in the world, and we want him, when that time comes, to have sense enough to keep clear of pitfalls, and to cleave unto that which is sincerely lucrative. It has been held by high authority that, since it is no part of the business of modern university professors to spy out the iniquity of bad young men, colleges would be reserved for studious men about whom their fathers and mothers are not anxious. But this opinion is not compulsory, and one may believe, if he can, that men may make their parents anxious and yet be capable of use to a college and of profiting by it. They can be useful as payers of dues, for one thing, and the increased income the college derives from them can be spent in giving additional advantages to their fellows. Their presence is worth something, too, as giving their quieter breth-

Don't shut all the bad boys out!

ren an opportunity to witness the reputed delights of a gay life, and to realize their hollowness. There are many things a man need never do in after-life if he has had the necessary experience of them in college; and many things he need never do at all if only he has seen them done. Thus, in colleges that permit the presence of some frivolous characters, studious young men are enabled to get, by observation alone, an ample and costly experience of life without being subjected to personal sacrifices either of time or money. Thus it appears that both the funds and the actual didactic abilities of a college are increased by letting in some of those young men as to whom their parents are anxious.

It is worth while, too, to consider the young men themselves. Even though they are defective in studiousness and cause their parents anxiety, should they be utterly thrown out for those reasons alone? There is always the chance that association with studious lads may be a benefit to them, and, certainly, if they are prohibited in advance from college it

is hard to suggest an experiment that may properly be tried with them, inasmuch as home has usually failed already with this sort, and they are not yet ripe for the gallows. If such young men acquire sufficient book-learning to pass the examinations preliminary to getting into a good college, and are willing to make a sufficient sacrifice of their personal inclinations to do the work which is indispensable to their continuance there, it is easily possible that they come as near to being in the right place as their perverted natures will permit.

It should not be forgotten, either, that though the boy is father to the man, the man is sometimes a very late crop. Some men ripen long after they have left college, but they ripen differently from having been in college. Nor is it invariably the men who have caused their parents the least anxiety who make the greatest figure in the world or show themselves best worth educating. General Grant never did much while at West Point (nor for long afterward) to warrant the expenditure of government

money on his education, but when his time finally came, his early training was worth more to this country than a brick house. Bismarck's time at Göttingen seems to have been put in largely in duelling and drinking punch with John Motley. Nevertheless, he was worth such pains as his professors took with him.

Give the studious youth the best of chances, and don't let them be hindered or cramped by rules which are only needed by roysterers, but don't throw the other sort out entirely. Give the lad for whom his parents quake a chance, too. He has the makings of character in him, and though such friendships and such education as you can give him may not seem like much now, they may make a heap of difference to him forty years hence.

A circular that has been sent out to Harvard graduates, asking for money to put some new athletic fields in order, is accompanied by a picture of the new grounds as they are going to be. The new fields are just about a hundred

acres roomier than the old (a good deal of it marsh-land, to be sure), and when they are laid out and planted, and built upon as the picture shows, with ball-fields, race-tracks, grand stands, boat-houses, and various supplementary temples to Hercules and Diana, they will bear exceedingly significant testimony to the growing disposition in this country, at this time, to seek a sound physical foundation for the intellectual superstructure. The Greeks built that way, and for centuries there has been a college-bred conviction that the way in which the Greeks did things was the right way. All the American colleges recognize now the educational usefulness of the work that is done with brain and muscle in the open air, and provide for it as they can.

Are athletics superseding headwork?

It is not to be wondered at if, in the last two months of the college year, the tendency toward athletics seems almost too strong, and the provision for it too ample. Then it is that respectable middle-aged fogies come out of their holes and cry aloud that physical education

has entirely got the better of the intellectual department. When spring has fairly cleared her throat and found her voice, her call is all but irresistible, and nothing less than the prospect of an indispensable pecuniary settlement on Saturday night avails to keep rightly constituted individuals indoors. It is particularly potent with undergraduates and legislators, and from class-rooms and State-house halls comes the same moan about the difficulty of getting a quorum. It is so pleasant at this season to sit on a bench in the sun and see good men strike at balls and run bases, or to stand on a moving platform-car and shriek at oarsmen on a river, or even to wave a bat or toil at an oar-handle one's-self, that the athletic proceedings supplementary to education really do get an inordinate amount of attention. It is natural enough that any calamitous-minded prophet who contrives to avoid the spell of the season, should heap dust on his head and reiterate, all through June, that the last has become not merely first, but the whole procession.

It is a comfort to be able to assure such protestants that there are figures, veracious and undeniable, which prove, in spite of all delusive signs, that the intellectual end of education was never so highly prized as now. Price is not an accurate measure of value, but often it is the most reliable measure to be had, and, at all events, it is good enough for purposes of comparison. When the price of the highest grade of intellectual education goes up because the demand has exceeded the supply, it is a pretty sure symptom that intellectual education is not being neglected. That, in a way, is what has happened in the American colleges. Term bills have not increased, but college presidents wish they had, and that the resulting aggravation of income was available to meet the increasing cost of professors. New universities in the West, strong in position and in the amplitude of their endowments, have sent successive emissaries eastward, charged to spare no expense in procuring the most distinguished pedagogical talent that is open to con-

No 1

siderations of pecuniary enlargement and increased opportunities of usefulness. The result is that, nowadays, a high-grade base-ball player can be hired for less money than a high-grade professor, and that some professors are in honorable possession of incomes that actually take away one of the immemorial reproaches of the pedagogical profession, since they *would* be considered amply remunerative of the services of an accomplished French cook.

So, whatever may be the feelings of the fogies as they read of crowded ball-games and boat-races on rivers swarming with yachts, for the present at least they may as well hold their peace. So long as professors are notoriously in demand at the highest prices ever offered, the fogies cannot hope to get anybody to believe that the intellectual end of education is neglected.

The tours of the college glee-clubs during the holidays, and one or two dinners of Yale and Harvard clubs that came to my notice, suggested certain re-

flections as to the proper limit of a graduate's devotion to his *alma mater*. When he stands up in evening dress, with a glass of champagne in his hand, and drinks her health, of course he is excusable if he tints his emotion with enthusiasm, and declares that he is hers and that she is his always, and more or less exclusively. But how far is this really so? and if it is so, is it a laudable or desirable fact?

When you get out of college,

College usually puts a stamp on a man which sticks to him all his life long. It shapes his tastes, and usually determines in what company he is to begin the serious work of living. It starts him. The most salient fact about a new graduate of Yale, say, or Princeton, who comes to New York to work, is that he is "a Yale man," or "a Princeton man."

That is all very well, at the start. It identifies him to a certain extent, and is useful for descriptive purposes. But leave him in the world—New York still, perhaps—for ten years. Then, if he is still described as "a Yale man of '93," without much further detail, I think it is

a fair inference that he has not been doing much. The description isn't creditable any longer. There ought to be more to say about him.

I should confess to a feeling of satisfaction if some man whom I had known for ten years in the city of Oshkosh, where I live, should ask me suddenly, "Were you ever in college?" I should tell him I had been, and if he asked me where, I should tell him that; and I should be better pleased that he should be interested enough in me, or in my mental processes, to want to know where they were trained, than that his first thought should be of my college, and his after-thought of me. And I think, moreover, that I do better by my college by putting in the best work I can on my own account, than if I proclaimed my faith in her methods more loudly, and was more effusive in my sympathy with others who did not have the advantage of her fostering care. Of course, the crime of too much concentration upon college and college men is the crime of the new graduate. But, equally of

course, it is something to be got over as promptly as may be—something narrowing, exclusive, and a hinderance to usefulness.

get clear out.

When you get out of college, young man, get clear out. You can get back for half a day or so at any time—at a boat-race, a foot-ball match, at commencement—whenever there is a reasonable excuse; but in your daily walk and conversation be something more than a college man—be a citizen. Be even an alderman, if you can. Take the world to be yours, as Bacon took all learning to be his, and don't forever limit your view of it by what was once visible from some point in New Haven or in Cambridge. Go and be a *man* somewhere. Don't be satisfied to be a mere "graduate" for all time. Of course you owe your *alma mater* a debt that you are always ready to pay, and a loyalty that should have no breaks in it. When you have grown to the size of Daniel Webster, and your Dartmouth asks you to defend her in court, you are going to be proud when you do it. That is all right.

You can't do too much for her, or do it too well. If you accumulate any reputation that is worth having, feel honored indeed when she offers to share it with you, but don't be too persistently anxious to strut in her plumes to the disparagement, it may be, of worthy men who have no claim to any similar privilege.

VI

THE TYRANNY OF THINGS

THE TYRANNY OF THINGS

A TRAVELLER newly returned from the Pacific Ocean tells pleasant stories of the Patagonians. As the steamer he was in was passing through Magellan's Straits some natives came out to her in boats. They wore no clothes at all, though there was snow in the air. A baby that came along with them made some demonstration that displeased its mother, who took it by the foot, as Thetis took Achilles, and soused it over the side of the boat into the cold sea-water. When she pulled it in, it lay a moment whimpering in the bottom of the boat, and then curled up and went to sleep. The missionaries there have tried to teach the natives to wear clothes, and to sleep in huts ; but, so far, the traveller says, with very limited success. The most shelter a Patagonian can endure is

A lesson from Patagonia.

a little heap of rocks or a log to the windward of him ; as for clothes, he despises them, and he is indifferent to ornament.

To many of us, groaning under the oppression of modern conveniences, it seems lamentably meddlesome to undermine the simplicity of such people, and enervate them with the luxuries of civilization. To be able to sleep out-of-doors, and go naked, and take sea-baths on wintry days with impunity, would seem a most alluring emancipation. No rent to pay, no tailor, no plumber, no newspaper to be read on pain of getting behind the times ; no regularity in anything, not even meals ; nothing to do except to find food, and no expense for undertakers or physicians, even if we fail ; what a fine, untrammelled life it would be ! It takes occasional contact with such people as the Patagonians to keep us in mind that civilization is the mere cultivation of our wants, and that the higher it is the more our necessities are multiplied, until, if we are rich enough, we get enervated by luxury, and the young men come in and carry us out.

We want so many, many things, it seems a pity that those simple Patagonians could not send missionaries to us to show us how to do without. The comforts of life, at the rate they are increasing, bid fair to bury us soon, as Tarpeia was buried under the shields of her friends the Sabines. Mr. Hamerton, in speaking of the increase of comfort in England, groans at the "trying strain of expense to which our extremely high standard of living subjects all except the rich." It makes each individual of us very costly to keep, and constantly tempts people to concentrate on the maintenance of fewer individuals means that would in simpler times be divided among many. "My grandfather," said a modern the other day, "left $200,000. He was considered a rich man in those days; but, dear me! he supported four or five families—all his needy relations and all my grandmother's." Think of an income of $10,000 a year being equal to such a strain, and providing suitably for a rich man's large family in the bargain! It wouldn't go so far now, and yet most of the

A crush of comforts.

reasonable necessaries of life cost less to-day than they did two generations ago. The difference is that we need so very many comforts that were not invented in our grandfather's time.

Bad fix of a hospital.

There is a hospital, in a city large enough to keep a large hospital busy, that is in straits for money. Its income from contributions last year was larger by nearly a third than its income ten years ago, but its expenses were nearly double its income. There were some satisfactory reasons for the discrepancy —the city had grown, the number of patients had increased, extraordinary repairs had been made—but at the bottom a very large expenditure seemed to be due to the struggle of the managers to keep the institution up to modern standards. The patients are better cared for than they used to be; the nurses are better taught and more skilful; "conveniences" have been greatly multiplied; the heating and cooking and laundry work is all done in the best manner with the most approved apparatus; the plumbing is as safe as sanitary engineer-

ing can make it ; the appliances for antiseptic surgery are fit for a fight for life ; there are detached buildings for contagious diseases, and an out-patient department, and the whole concern is administered with wisdom and economy. There is only one distressing circumstance about this excellent charity, and that is that its expenses exceed its income. And yet its managers have not been extravagant : they have only done what the enlightened experience of the day has considered to be necessary. If the hospital has to shut down and the patients must be turned out, at least the receiver will find a well-appointed institution of which the managers have no reason to be ashamed.

The trouble seems to be with very many of us, in contemporary private life as well as in institutions, that the enlightened experience of the day invents more necessaries than we can get the money to pay for. Our opulent friends are constantly demonstrating to us by example how indispensably convenient the modern necessaries are, and we keep

having them until we either exceed our incomes or miss the higher concerns of life in the effort to maintain a complete outfit of its creature comforts.

And the saddest part of all is that it is in such great measure an American development. We Americans keep inventing new necessaries, and the people of the effete monarchies gradually adopt such of them as they can afford. When we go abroad we growl about the inconveniences of European life—the absence of gas in bedrooms, the scarcity and sluggishness of elevators, the primitive nature of the plumbing, and a long list of other things without which life seems to press unreasonably upon our endurance. Nevertheless, if the *res angustæ domi* get straiter than usual, we are always liable to send our families across the water to spend a season in the practice of economy in some land where it costs less to live.

Of course it all belongs to Progress, and no one is quite willing to have it stop, but it does a comfortable sufferer good to get his head out of his conveniences sometimes and complain.

There was a story in the newspapers the other day about a Massachusetts minister who resigned his charge because someone had given his parish a fine house, and his parishioners wanted him to live in it. His salary was too small, he said, to admit of his living in a big house, and he would not do it. He was even deaf to the proposal that he should share the proposed tenement with the sewing societies and clubs of his church, and when the matter came to a serious issue, he relinquished his charge and sought a new field of usefulness. The situation was an amusing instance of the embarrassment of riches. Let no one to whom restricted quarters may have grown irksome, and who covets larger dimensions of shelter, be too hasty in deciding that the minister was wrong. Did you ever see the house that Hawthorne lived in at Lenox? Did you ever see Emerson's house at Concord? They are good houses for Americans to know and remember. They permitted thought.

A wise man who shunned a big house.

A big house is one of the greediest

cormorants which can light upon a little income. Backs may go threadbare and stomachs may worry along on indifferent filling, but a house *will* have things, though its occupants go without. It is rarely complete, and constantly tempts the imagination to flights in brick and dreams in lath and plaster. It develops annual thirsts for paint and wall-paper, at least, if not for marble and wood-carving. The plumbing in it must be kept in order on pain of death. Whatever price is put on coal, it has to be heated in winter; and if it is rural or suburban, the grass about it must be cut even though funerals in the family have to be put off for the mowing. If the tenants are not rich enough to hire people to keep their house clean, they must do it themselves, for there is no excuse that will pass among housekeepers for a dirty house. The master of a house too big for him may expect to spend the leisure which might be made intellectually or spiritually profitable, in acquiring and putting into practice fag ends of the arts of the plumber, the bellhanger, the

locksmith, the gasfitter, and the carpenter. Presently he will know how to do everything that can be done in the house, except enjoy himself. He will learn about taxes, too, and water-rates, and how such abominations as sewers or new pavements are always liable to accrue at his expense. As for the mistress, she will be a slave to carpets and curtains, wall-paper, painters, and women who come in by the day to clean. She will be lucky if she gets a chance to say her prayers, and thrice and four times happy when she can read a book or visit with her friends. To live in a big house may be a luxury, provided that one has a full set of money and an enthusiastic housekeeper in one's family; but to scrimp in a big house is a miserable business. Yet such is human folly, that for a man to refuse to live in a house because it is too big for him, is such an exceptional exhibition of sense that it becomes the favorite paragraph of a day in the newspapers.

An ideal of earthly comfort, so common that every reader must have seen

it, is to get a house so big that it is burdensome to maintain, and fill it up so full of jimcracks that it is a constant occupation to keep it in order. Then, when the expense of living in it is so great that you can't afford to go away and rest from the burden of it, the situation is complete and boarding-houses and cemeteries begin to yawn for you. How many Americans, do you suppose, out of the droves that flock annually to Europe, are running away from oppressive houses?

When nature undertakes to provide a house, it fits the occupant. Animals which build by instinct build only what they need, but man's building instinct, if it gets a chance to spread itself at all, is boundless, just as all his instincts are. For it is man's peculiarity that nature has filled him with impulses to do things, and left it to his discretion when to stop. She never tells him when he has finished. And perhaps we ought not to be surprised that in so many cases it happens that he doesn't know, but just goes ahead as long as the materials last.

If another *man* tries to oppress him, he understands that and is ready to fight to death and sacrifice all he has, rather than summit; but the tyranny of *things* is so subtle, so gradual in its approach, and comes so masked with seeming benefits, that it has him hopelessly bound before he suspects his fetters. He says from day to day, "I will add thus to my house;" "I will have one or two more horses;" "I will make a little greenhouse in my garden;" "I will allow myself the luxury of another hired man;" and so he goes on having things and imagining that he is richer for them. Presently he begins to realize that it is the things that own him. He has piled them up on his shoulders, and there they sit like Sindbad's Old Man and drive him; and it becomes a daily question whether he can keep his trembling legs or not.

All of which is not meant to prove that property has no real value, or to rebut Charles Lamb's scornful denial that enough is as good as a feast. It is not meant to apply to the rich, who

can have things comfortably, if they are philosophical; but to us poor, who have constant need to remind ourselves that where the verbs *to have* and *to be* cannot both be completely inflected, the verb *to be* is the one that best repays concentration.

Let's blame the rich!

Perhaps we would not be so prone to swamp ourselves with luxuries and vain possessions that we cannot afford, if it were not for our deep-lying propensity to associate with people who are better off than we are. It is usually the sight of their appliances that upsets our little stock of sense, and lures us into an improvident competition.

There is a proverb of Solomon's which prophesies financial wreck or ultimate misfortune of some sort to people who make gifts to the rich. Though not expressly stated, it is somehow implied that the proverb is intended not as a warning to the rich themselves, who may doubtless exchange presents with impunity, but for persons whose incomes rank somewhere between "moderate circumstances" and destitution. That such

persons should need to be warned not to spend their substance on the rich seems odd, but when Solomon was busied with precept he could usually be trusted not to waste either words or wisdom. Poor people *are* constantly spending themselves upon the rich, not only because they like them, but often from an instinctive conviction that such expenditure is well invested. I wonder sometimes whether this is true.

They are inconvenient, anyway,

To associate with the rich seems pleasant and profitable. They are apt to be agreeable and well informed, and it is good to play with them and enjoy the usufruct of all their pleasant apparatus; but, of course, you can neither hope nor wish to get anything for nothing. Of the cost of the practice, the expenditure of time still seems to be the item that is most serious. It takes a great deal of time to cultivate the rich successfully. If they are working people their time is so much more valuable than yours, that when you visit with them it is apt to be your time that is sacrificed. If they are not working people it is worse yet.

Their special outings, when they want your company, always come when you cannot get away from work except at some great sacrifice, which, under the stress of temptation, you are too apt to make. Their pleasuring is on so large a scale that you cannot make it fit your times or necessities. You can't go yachting for half a day, nor will fifty dollars take you far on the way to shoot big game in Manitoba. You simply cannot play with them when they play, because you cannot *reach;* and when they work you cannot play with them, because their time then is worth so much a minute that you cannot bear to waste it. And you cannot play with them when you are working yourself and they are inactively at leisure, because, cheap as your time is, you can't spare it.

though pleasant.

Charming and likeable as they are, and good to know, it must be admitted that there is a superior convenience about associating most of the time with people who want to do about what we want to do at about the same time, and whose abilities to do what they wish

approximate to ours. It is not so much a matter of persons as of times and means. You cannot make your opportunities concur with the opportunities of people whose incomes are ten times greater than yours. When you play together it is at a sacrifice, and one which *you* have to make. Solomon was right. To associate with very rich people involves sacrifices. You cannot even be rich yourself without expense, and you may just as well give over trying. Count it, then, among the costs of a considerable income that in enlarging the range of your sports it inevitably contracts the circle of those who will find it profitable to share them.

VII

WILLS AND HEIRS

WILLS AND HEIRS

IN the same month, not long ago, the wills of two very rich men who died in New York were made public. One testator left a widow and several children. The other was childless, but his wife survived him. The former left the whole of his estate, with the exception of some unimportant legacies, to his wife and children. The other, after providing for his wife an income sufficient for her maintenance in reasonable comfort during her life, left very large bequests to colleges and hospitals. His heirs-at-law were remembered with modest legacies, and his executors named as residuary legatees. These two wills being probated about the same time, and disposing of estates believed to be of approximately equal amount, were much compared and contrasted, and became

Two wills contrasted.

the subject of amusing criticism. The testator who left money to the colleges was lauded and held up as a man of splendid generosity ; while the fact that the other departing millionaire left nothing to charity was put down in evidence of his selfishness.

Now, it is a very good plan for very rich men to leave bequests to charitable uses. But the fact that a man leaves a great fortune to charity by will is no proof at all that he was a generous man. He doesn't give his own money, he gives money that *was* his—that, perhaps, he held on to as long as he could, and that necessarily found a new owner as soon as the breath passed out of his body. It is impossible to be generous by will. A will does not give, it only regulates a division. A will may be cited in evidence of the testator's affection, or of his sense of justice, or of his good sense, but not of his generosity — unless, indeed, he is known to have denied himself and saved and accumulated money, not because he wanted it for himself, but for the sake of those who would have it after him.

Of those two wills, the one that, on the face of it, might readily excite criticism is the one that contains the bequests to the colleges and hospitals. That will might convey the impression of a lack of cordial relations between the testator and his family, or that he was a man who did not want his widow or his legal heirs to have anything more than they absolutely needed. Of course, such an impression might do the testator great injustice ; but we are not considering facts, only appearances. As for the other will, it was, in appearance, the will of a man who loved and respected his wife and his children. Practically it was such a will as the law makes for men who die intestate, and it may be presumed that such a will accords pretty closely with public sentiment.

It has been remarked that the name of the man who remembered the colleges will live long after that of the man whose children get his money. But that, too, is a hasty conclusion, and one that it is adverse to public policy to concede. For, first, it were a poor compli-

ment to pay any man to say that the money he left in the world was of more value to it than the children he left ; his money is something apart from him, but his children are part of himself. And, moreover, that a man is better employed in building up a fortune than in raising sons and daughters, is what many Americans seem to think ; but the very fact that they think so, and act upon that opinion, seems to a good many philosophers a reason to fear for the future of the American people. The childless man who endows colleges does well, and we do well to praise him. But we cannot afford to let such praise go the length of disparaging the example of a man who raises and endows a family. For that husbands should honor their wives, and fathers should take thought for their children, are conditions necessarily precedent to the preservation of those "family stocks" that President Eliot tells us are of such importance to the republic.

And, apropos of wills, it has happened to me, within a year or two, to look on

at the partition of several considerable estates, and to observe in a general way what the heirs seemed to be doing with their money. They were an assorted lot of heirs, with such differences in tastes as people usually have, and I have been surprised at the similarity in their methods of primary expenditure. A reasonable outbreak in clothes was one of the early symptoms of those that came under my notice; followed in several cases by investments in horses, carriages, and hired men, in houses and domiciliary improvements, and less immediately by the purchase of increased leisure. Following the leisure came travel. Out of a score or so of these new heirs not less than a dozen reported in the early spring, without any general previous understanding, at an expensive and delightful watering-place in Florida. They have since gone to Europe with a unanimity which brought to some of them the embarrassment of finding themselves on the same steamer with co-heirs with whom those exasperating differences which are so apt to be inci-

Results of an observation of heirs.

dent to the distribution of property had left them on politely antagonistic terms.

It is an interesting deduction from the behavior of these heirs that if you distribute a certain number of millions among a certain number of intelligent, adult Americans, you can forecast the general lines of their expenditure for a year or two ahead, and even mark upon the map the places at which they may be confidently expected to appear within a certain time. Of course, your forecast will not be verified in all cases, but if you are reasonably intelligent about it the accordance between what you expect and what you observe will be close enough to give you a new idea about the smallness of the world and the influence of circumstances and personal example on human action. You will find that people newly intrusted with about the same amount of money, in the same country, at the same time, go through for a time about the same set of motions. But, of course, they get different degrees of enjoyment out of them. For any one who can pay can go

and do, but the capacity to enjoy is strictly personal. That is why, after heirs have had their money awhile, and tried the amusements that every one is bound to try, they cease to fit your generalities. They find out presently what they like and what they do not enjoy, and then their individuality reasserts itself, and they go their several ways again, with tastes and purposes modified indeed by money, but not obliterated by it.

VIII

THE TRAVEL HABIT

THE TRAVEL HABIT

YOU probably remember who it was that called travelling the fool's paradise. I do not recall his name at this moment, and my books are elsewhere; but he was a man of sense, and I am of his opinion. I say *I* am of his opinion, for this is a personal protest. I dare say no one else feels as I do about it, or has the same sense of injury. Writing, this eleventh day of April—and begging humbly any future reader's pardon for carrying him so far back toward the inclement spring—I ask, Where is the Rogers family, with whom it is my habit to dine on Thursdays? Where are the Robinsons, who invited me to dinner the day before I went to New York, and were to have renewed the invitation when I got back? Where are the Joneses, with whom I dine

Inconvenience of having nobody stay at home.

on Sundays? Where are the Browns, that have such pleasant girls with such attractive Easter hats to visit them after Lent? Where are most of the people who are *folks*, and keep the breath of life stirring in this town of Wayback?

The Rogerses! The Rogerses went to Florida about the first of February, and are now at Fort Monroe on their way back. They may be home again by the first of May. The Robinsons went to Mexico last week with the Fitztoms. They gave no bonds to return, and won't be back until—until nobody knows when. The Joneses have been spending the winter in the South of Europe and are at Monte Carlo; and the Browns are still in Colorado. What sort of a spring it is for me any coherent reader can piece out of what he imagines about the number of people in Wayback who are folkable according to my personal taste.

And how is it for the summer? Some of the Wayback tramps will be at home again then, perhaps—for little spells of time. I hope so; but in the summer I like to get away myself for a few days.

But where to? The whole family of Iresons—father, mother, aunts, and all six of the children—who used to make Pittox so lively in August, sail on the City of Jericho the first Wednesday in June, to be gone until September. The Blenkinsops, who had such a good place at Sopton for September, have rented it, and propose to spend June in Japan and August in Norway. Alenson, who used to come up for our September tennis, is going to the Feejee Islands this year instead. He says he wants to go to some place that isn't next door, and that it takes a little while to reach. The Easterlings have hired a moor in Scotland, and the Westons a castle somewhere—in Spain, I dare say—and Newport will know neither of them this summer. No one who has a place will be in it, and there's no out-of-the-way corner of the globe where you won't be more liable to run up against your next-door neighbor than you would be to find him next door.

For my part I protest against all this straggling and globe-trotting. If there

were any limit or end, or any legitimate purpose to it, it might be tolerated. But there is not. It is simply a return to vagrancy and nomadism. The same people who are doing all this straggling this year will be at it again next year, or the year after at the outside. Once the habit is formed they never stay at home except for so long as suffices for necessary measures of financial retrievement.

Of course, there is some use in travel. It is instructive to have seen the world and to know what is in it. It gives the means of making comparisons, imparts culture, and opens the eyes generally. But these contemporary tramps of ours have long since passed the stage of learning anything. Their notion of travel is rest and repairs, and to have fun—good things in their way, but by this generation inordinately pursued. I say they are a frivolous lot—our tramps; that they try to dodge life; that by keeping perpetually on the go they succeed in evading the habits of work and the natural ties that stay-at-home people

have to form, and the responsibilities that they have to share.

In conversation two years ago with this expostulator, an eminent man of letters said that he had travelled thoroughly abroad some thirty years ago, and got great benefit from it, but had not been to Europe since. "My doctor," he said, "said to me a number of years ago, 'You must absolutely stop all work and go abroad.' I said to him, 'If I quit work can't I stay at home?' 'Oh, yes,' he said, 'if you can do it. What I want is to stop the work. The European part of it is not essential.' So I stayed at home, and hardly made a mark with a pen for six months."

Here was a man who might have gone to Europe and didn't. The excuse came to him ready-made; he had the inevitable doctor to put the responsibility upon, but he stayed at home. It was borne in upon me that his example was one that ought to be published as a corrective to that vagrant spirit of the age against which Miss Cobbe filed a passing protest when she wrote: "The gadfly

which pursued poor Io seems to have stung us all, and we flit about the globe restlessly, until it has nearly come to pass that everyone who has a home has let it to somebody else, and the last place to expect to find a man is at home."

Special inducements to nomadicity.

One curious exponent of the prevailing restlessness is the practice that obtains so generally just now among American cities of offering bonuses and pecuniary inducements to manufacturers to move their plant. After a fire that burned down part of a sewing-machine factory the other day, the owners received so many proposals from aspiring cities that wanted to take them in, that they were obliged to publish a notice to the effect that only a small part of their works had been burned, and that they were not open to proposals for adoption. Any factory or established business employing labor can have its choice, nowadays, from a long list of cities, new and old, any one of which will give it a site for a factory, pay the expenses of moving, and

perhaps contribute substantially toward the construction of a new building. People who own land, or are engaged in business, in cities, realize that it pays them to have their cities grow, and they are willing to hire desirable inhabitants to come to them. They rely upon getting their money back in the increased value of land, or the general increase in business. The result is that the migratory disposition already so pronounced in these days is intensified, and it has become a familiar thing not merely for individuals to move, but for great aggregations of working-men to shift the scene of their activities from one city to another, sometimes thousands of miles away.

Time was when where the average man found himself living, there he continued to live, unless circumstances of exceptional urgency impelled him to change his residence. It is different now. Transportation has become so cheap, and travel so easy, that the ties of locality sit very lightly on the average American, and the fact that you find

him settled this year in New York or Pennsylvania, affords you a very uncertain basis for expecting to find him next year in the same place. When you hear of him again, if he hasn't moved to Texas, or Tacoma, or Southern California, or Maine, or North Dakota, you feel that he must have had some exceptionally good reasons for staying at home. Men used to wag their heads and croak about the inability of rolling stones to gather moss. We have changed all that. Moss is at a discount, and there is a premium upon rolling.

Summer travel excusable;

Of course for families including small children, who leave the cities for more salubrious parts in summer, and even for working-men who spend their summer vacation away from home, there is a good deal to be said. "Everybody" goes somewhere in the summer, and if they can't go on their own hook, a subscription is got up to send them. "Everybody" now includes all the city ministers, the college professors, the wives and children of laborious and well-paid brain-workers in big towns, and people

generally who can afford it, and whose homes do not happen to be so situated that they prefer to go away in the winter. The summer vacation habit with a concomitant change of air and abode has taken so strong a hold on the lucky tenth of the population, that the rest of us who either cannot go, or can only stay a fortnight when we do go, should comfort ourselves in our restricted condition with any solace that will fit our case.

There are some compensating reflections that we are entitled to entertain. To get one's mind thrown off the track and jolted into new intellectual gaits, and one's liver, too; and to see new people in new places and hear them talk about new things; and to be quit of the daily grind and free to devote the solid part of the day to frivolous uses—those are enviable privileges, and the best of them is that when they have the right effect it stays by you all winter. But if you can't go it is certainly worth remembering how sharp the jolt often is when the intellectual wheel

but many people are much safer at home.

leaves the rail. It is so much easier to do to-morrow what you did yesterday than every day to face the responsibility of keeping yourself pacified with novel occupations! Then at home you know your own plumber, and can recognize the monsters in the drinking-water when you see them under a microscope; but when you go away you become the *corpus vile* of sanitary experiments to the precedent conditions of which you were not a party. As an involuntary home-dweller you are entitled to meditate on all the cases mentioned last autumn in the newspapers of persons who languished on regretful couches with typhoid fevers picked up in a summer quest after health. And if there was any ice-cream poisoning done anywhere in a summer resort, you are entitled to remember that, as well as any and all of the contagious complaints that anybody's children brought home with them.

So, too, as to the moral, intellectual, and social hazards, which are really a good deal more terrifying than the physical ones. If there are rocks in the

harbor of one's home there are buoys over them, or at least you know where they are and can steer clear; but once you get away, unless you have a pilot for every place, reasonable caution demands that when you are not absolutely at anchor you shall spend the bulk of your time up forward heaving the lead. There is your husband, madam—such a good, tame, domestic creature at home. Take his work away from him and turn him loose to find himself employments and what astonishing things may happen to him! Cocktails! Those are trifles. Kind and devoted husbands lured unwilling to the mountain-tops have found *affinities* there, and affinities that in some cases were the theretofore devoted wives of other men. Surely any good man who has one wife already would stay at home till moss accumulated on his scalp rather than go gadding and take the chance of running against his affinity. To be slaughtered, or partly slaughtered, in a railroad accident on the way is bad, but nothing like as bad as to arrive safely and find your affinity awaiting you.

Wives, too, have found affinities in their summer holidays. Others a little less unfortunate have developed a disastrous craving to get into society. Others have become dissatisfied with their customary raiment and incurred aspirations pregnant with pecuniary disaster. Maidens have broken coins with ineligible youths not of their own set; parents' hopes have been blighted by the collapse of eligible sons before impossible summer girls. The rector of an affluent Episcopal parish was once converted at Bar Harbor and became a Baptist, to his severe pecuniary loss and the manifold detriment of his family. So, it is narrated, a Boston physician became infatuated with Christian Science during a month's holiday at Narragansett Pier and abandoned his practice because of conscientious scruples.

People have stayed at home and lived to be a century old. A shorter experience than that has qualified careful observers to assert that when they have been unable to go in search of change a little patience has enabled them to en-

joy it at home. They even say that the arrangement known as the seasons has been expressly contrived to bring wholesome varieties of climate around to the doors of folks who wait for them. They are old fogies, such people, but there are compensations about their way.

IX

NEWSPAPERS AND PEOPLE

NEWSPAPERS AND PEOPLE

WHY do people care so much about what is said in newspapers? They do care, especially when the something said is said of themselves. My friend the Judge remarked the other day, on what seemed to him the absurd fact, that when a young man of questionable wisdom made a remark you gave it such attention as his abilities and the accuracy of his information seemed to warrant; but when the same young man got his remark committed to type, and put into a newspaper, it became clothed in an authority which you felt bound to respect, and did respect more or less, however you might differ from the opinion. But the fact was not so absurd as the Judge thought.

Why people care what newspapers say.

When Brown remarks to Jones, "Rob-

inson is an ass," that is one thing. Brown may not really mean what he says. His remark is intended for Jones, and very possibly he counts upon certain qualities in Jones to qualify its force. Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, and of course very much of the force of talk lies in the listener's ear. Then, too, when Brown makes his remark it may be with recognition of the chance that he may feel differently about Robinson the next morning, and may recall his opinion the next time he and Jones meet. But when Brown, the editor, composing the opinions of his newspaper, has his disparaging opinion of Robinson put into type and published, that is a different matter.

In the first place, when the opinion once gets into print it becomes something more than Brown's opinion. It is the opinion of a responsible business establishment, which very possibly represents an investment of some hundreds of thousands of dollars, the profits of which depend in a considerable measure upon its reputation, which in turn de-

pends, to some extent, on the ability of its editor to say the right thing at the right time, and defend it.

And to anything which a responsible newspaper prints attach many of the qualities which thus characterize its personal remarks. For whatever it says it must be ready either to fight, or to apologize and pay. Inevitably it will have to apologize sometimes; but the apologies of great newspapers are far between, and are apt, when they come, to relate to matters of minor importance. The obligation to be right, or at least defensible, in the first place, is seriously taken, and an apology is a confession.

In the second place, when an opinion about Robinson gets into a newspaper it is on the way to become the opinion of that newspaper's readers, and from that it is only a step to becoming the opinion of the public. If the remark is so manifestly true, or supported by such evidence that the average intelligence accepts it, it comes with the force of revelation, as did the remark of the little boy in the fairy tale that the king

hadn't his clothes on. From private opinion to public opinion is as great a step as from a liquid to a crystal; but when matters have come to the right point a little jar will often precipitate the change in an instant.

Robinson may bear with equanimity the knowledge that Brown in talking with Jones has called him an ass, but the suspicion that Jones's opinion is public opinion may reasonably disconcert him.

And speaking of the newspapers, and what they say, a person whose identity it is unnecessary to publish here, but a very important person, who was grumbling the other day about those ambitious paragraphs in the untrammelled press which record from December to May that Mrs. Thompson Jones had a party, and Mr. and Mrs. Brown Robinson and Mr. and Mrs. Rogers Smith were there, expressed himself as fatigued with the record of these events, and with the constant repetition of the same names in connection with them. Why

these names and no others, he wanted to know, and argued that the apparent recognition of their worth conveyed in this exclusive notice was one thing that lulled these people in the delusion that they were "the folks," and made them feel above other persons whose movements gained less notoriety. He wanted something done about it.

One office of "news."

This, to tell him that he is fretting over something that ought not to disturb him. When he goes to the theatre does he complain because his name and yours and mine are not on the play-bill, but all the space there is given up to identifying a lot of actors who are not a bit more worthy as mere men, when it comes down to real worth, than we are? Let him take rich society, rich New York society for example, from the same point of view. The persons whose social achievements get so much more notice than ours may not be really more admirable than we, but they are occupying the stage. So far from being vexed at them, he ought to regard them from afar off with grateful emotions, as per-

sons who are employed to perform social feats at their own expense for his diversion, and whose operations are kindly set forth in the public press so that he can easily inform himself about them when personal observation is not convenient. Not the books in the Astor Library, not the pictures in the Metropolitan Museum, nor Cleopatra, her needle in the Park, are more distinctly ours to use and to profit by than these Brown Robinsons and Rogers Smiths. When their splendor has its setbacks it is for us spectators to draw moral lessons therefrom for our use. When young Thompson Smith elopes with a ballet-dancer we can wag our heads as we read about it and be thankful that our sons are not exposed to the demoralizing influences of large means; and the same when Benita Brown Robinson marries some scarecrow prince, or Lawrence Perry the Younger's difficulties with the governors of the Union Club are advertised to the world. Be sure the recording angel takes regular note of the advantage it is to us to have these rich always

with us, and that we shall be held to strict accountability for all the profit we ought to have received from our newspaper familiarity with their ingoings and outcomings, and all their vicissitudes of experience.

There may even be profit for us in the labors of a certain gifted but unscrupulous gossip who writes letters from Gotham to a Western newspaper, when tattling about New York's eligible youths. She writes :

The Lawrence Perrys.

Lawrence Perry's son, Lawrence, Jr., will inherit most of his father's wealth and much of his prestige. Perry, Sr., is, par excellence, the leader of the "fast-and-swagger" set ; he sets "the pace that kills," which the ten-millionaires follow, and he nevertheless manages to keep a safe hold on his own millions, which Lawrence, Jr., will get in good time. He has trained the young fellow to walk in his footsteps, to be an exquisite in dress, a bird of prey among women, a hard rider, a deep drinker, a turfman, a gambler, and withal a keen business man, a genial fellow, polished man, and a pretty good friend. He will marry, doubtless in his own set, a woman as congenial and gay-tempered as himself, who will not be jealous, and, as long as the outward appearances are observed, will drive him with a very light hand and loose rein.

The names in the correspondent's paragraph have been changed. Very possibly her description of the father and son whom she named does them injustice, but the type that is portrayed is real. Alas, alas, to how many thousand men of Gotham does the life of the Lawrence Perrys, father and son, seem the ideal of an existence! To have abundance of money and health, and to spend both in "having a good time;" to be a rake and a turfman; to have the *habendum* and *tenendum* clauses of one's nature developed to the degree required for the successful management of "business;" to be a graduate of Delmonico's and an exponent of Poole's; to ride hard; to drink deep; to play high; to marry, but on terms of such mutual consideration as our gossip suggests. What a life to lead, and to lead, not from necessity, but to choose as the highest good! A life of glitter and go, but shorn of tenderness, of self-denial, of any true service to mankind.

One of the most repulsive characteristics of a great city is the presence in it

of the Lawrence Perrys and their influence upon the town, especially upon the lads thereof. They are so pervasive and so noisy that they slop over everything. They catch the eye with their glitter. Their coaches, and yachts, and palaces constantly force themselves on the attention. It is hard to convince little Joe Brown and young Jack Robinson that there is anything better in life than the Lawrence Perrys have got; and it may be hard presently to keep Joe and Jack from following after the Perrys—albeit afar off, as near as their circumstances can be stretched to permit.

The Lawrence Perrys are not much beloved, but they do not incur the full measure of the contempt that they deserve. Much of the obloquy that they should monopolize is shared by that much more numerous and less objectionable product of contemporary civilization whose misfortune it is to be known as "the society young man." Alas for him, there is a haze of ambiguity about him which makes his identity obscure

The society young man.

and doubtful. People question his existence just as they do the existence of the devil, but he must exist, for the newspapers are full of his deeds. Unlike Fitz Greene Halleck's friend, whom none named but to praise, the society young man is rarely brought into the conversation without being injuriously dwelt upon. Whatever he may have done is a matter for speculation, but it must have been a dreadful thing. He has no friends. Everybody hates him and evilly entreats him. All the ill-advised infants who lack putative fathers are attributed to him; his example is held up to Sunday children as a red light on the road to perdition; his life is pictured as a conglomeration of patent-leather shoes, shirt-front, and opera-hats, irrigated with champagne, punctuated with cigarettes, and seasoned with a deceitful smile. The enthusiasm he inspires in his traducers is admirably illustrated in some recent statements of a certain Reverend Douglas, of Montreal, who lately observed in the course of some disparaging remarks about his

neighbors: "The society man will lie, he will swindle, he will cheat at cards, he will forge, he will defalcate, he will smile in the face of a man as a friend while he is wrecking his domestic honor, and, as I have known, he will drink the very wine that charity has donated for his dying wife and fill the bottle with water."

No ordinary villain could have provoked such reprehension as this. Either the society young man is a dangerous foe to humanity, who ought to be shut up, or else he has been maligned.

Without desiring to incur the dislike of any worthy person by speaking up for such an outcast, it is excusable to admit one's impression that the society young man is not really all Hyde, but has his Jekyll side, like the rest of us. He is young and frivolous, no doubt, but he has good ideas about the use of soap and fair prospects of learning other virtues as his experience increases. The censors of public morals ought not to be after him too fiercely because he dances with the girls. He will have finished with that presently. Indeed, he will

have finished in great measure with most of his present amusements, and will either be dead or hard at work trying to support his wife and children. Butterfly he is, perhaps, but grub he was and grub he will become again before you know it. Be kinder to him while he lasts, his turn is so very, very brief.

X

THE MYSTERIES OF LIFE

THE MYSTERIES OF LIFE

IN a world where it is very desirable to be entertained, and not always easy to find entertainment, there is a great deal to be got out of a discreet consideration of the mysteries of life. They give one something to theorize about in odd moments, and to have theories about them gives one an interest in whole series and classes of facts which seem to fit in with such theories or to upset them. If the facts won't fit the theory, then there is the theory to change; and to have one's theory driven into a new shape is the next best thing to having it justified.

Cultivate a few mysteries.

If existence is a little poky, and if you live in a quiet place and cannot afford to own horses enough to completely occupy your leisure, or if you are restless ashore and too poor to have a yacht, or

if you are the uneasy husband of one wife, or the wife of one husband, and think it immoral to flirt, it may pay you to attach yourself to one of these mysteries. Do it, not necessarily in the expectation of solving your problem, but for the sake of pure cogitation. It is a natural resource of a human being, for to puzzle over the mysteries of life leads to a reaching out after the great centre and solution of all the mysteries, and to the establishment of relations in which, vague and slender as they are, the mind of man finds rest.

There was a little tale in the newspaper the other day about Mr. Edison, that he held up his finger and bent it, and asked, "What does that?" Failing to get a satisfactory reply, he said he was trying to find out what is the force that pulls the strings that makes animate creatures move. That is one of the great mysteries—the mystery of motion. It is that, we are told, that Mr. Keely, the motor-man, has been brooding over for several decades past. Mr. Keely's experience has not been such as

to encourage any poor man to theorize on this subject for a living; nevertheless, it is a great subject for a mind to dwell upon in its leisure moments. Sir Isaac was thinking about it when the apple fell and gave him an idea that was of value to him, and has been useful ever since. There is always this advantage about having one's mind run on something in particular, that even if it does not bring down what it is aimed at it is more likely to hit something else that is worth while than if it were wandering aimlessly. As witness the usefulness of the alchemists to the science of chemistry. Even if Mr. Edison's mind fails to grasp the force that crooks his finger, it is very possible that he may puzzle out some minor problem that is worth while. Indeed, it is reported already that he has a fascinating theory that attributes an individual will to every atom, and declares that matter is sentient.

Another mystery of captivating qualities is that which shrouds the relation

of the body to the spirit. It was the mystery whose partial solution led Dr. Henry Jekyll to make the disastrous acquaintance of Edward Hyde. Describing his speculations on the duality of man and sundry chemical investigations that supplemented them, Dr. Jekyll writes: "A side-light began to shine upon the subject from the laboratory table. I began to perceive more deeply than it has ever yet been stated the trembling immateriality, the mist-like transience of this seemingly so solid body in which we walk attired. . . . I not only recognized my natural body for the mere aura and effulgence of certain of the powers that made up my spirit, but managed to compound a drug," etc.

The cure mystery.

One division of this mystery embraces the subject of cures. Once get on the track of that and every newspaper story about faith-cure, or any of the varieties of mental healing, becomes a thing to be weighed, and if it seems to have substance, to be held in mind for consideration and future use. All kinds of "mir-

acles" bear on this mystery. Hypnotism and hypnotic cures are intimately mixed up with it. Telepathy has to do with it; apparitions, presentiments, and clairvoyance are more or less allied to it. Doctors, quacks, patent medicines, and all sorts of "healers," regular and otherwise, bear a relation to it that will come constantly under discussion.

Anyone, for example, who is thoroughly awake on the subject of the cure mystery, must have read with interest the other day that the Board of Health of Massachusetts had recommended to the Legislature of that commonwealth to make a law providing that all persons engaged in the healing art in any form, except dentistry, shall register within a certain time in the office of the clerk of the town where they propose to practice, describing themselves, and giving, under oath, in detail their courses of instruction in medicine and the names of their colleges; false entries to be subject to the penalties for perjury, and failure to register, to fines or imprisonment. It seems that there are too many

Quacks vs. *regular physicians.*

quacks and irregular healers in Massachusetts, and the regular doctors think it time that they were suppressed.

Without any pretence of faith in any doctor who is not regular, without ignoring the sound objections to self-constituted physicians, and without prejudice to a sincere intention of calling in a thoroughly instructed and expert practitioner whenever occasion demands, it is still permissible to smile amiably at the professional antipathy to quacks. The successful physician, with exceptions which happily are much more numerous than they were, is the most intolerant despot on earth. And we encourage him to be so. We are vaguely aware of the limitations of his knowledge; we know that he has to guess first what is the matter with us, and next what will do us good, and that though there are facts his acquaintance with which helps him to guess right, many theories that regulate his professional action are still hypothetical, and may or may not be correct. We know that he has discovered that many of the methods his

father used were unwise and deleterious, and that the doses his grandfather gave often hastened the result they were intended to prevent, and hindered what they were designed to induce. We know not only that he is a man, and therefore fallible, but that his professional science, like his father's and grandfather's, is progressive, and is still very far from being exact. Nevertheless, when anything ails us, in spite of all we know of his limitations, we fly to him as though he were all-wise, and do as nearly what he tells us to as our flesh and our pockets permit. For we believe that, erring and inadequate as he is, he knows more than we do, and that his knowledge is, on the whole, the best that is at our command.

This childlike trust in our physicians is a phenomenon which is creditable to us and to our doctors, and from which we both get benefit. *Experto crede* is sound advice, and ninety-something times out of a hundred we take it and do well. The other odd times either we take it and don't do well, or we take it with misgivings, or we don't take it at

all. The world's experience has taught that in certain kinds of cases the wisdom that has finally justified itself has been the wisdom of the unlearned. The babes and sucklings of knowledge have hit upon the truth that the doctors have not been able to see, because their learning has stood in their light. Of course, if a thing isn't so, the more reasons a man has for believing that it must be so, the farther he is from the truth, and the less chance there is of its percolating into him. Thus, when bleeding was the great medical cure-all, the worthy physicians who knew exactly why it must be the one indispensable remedy were really in a more hopeless bog of ignorance than people who knew nothing about medicine at all, but simply regulated their practice by the light of nature. Every man to his trade is a maxim that we habitually respect, in that we don't send our horses to a carpenter-shop to be shod, nor employ a gardener to look after the plumbing. The man whom we expect to be conversant with horseshoeing as a contemporary art is the blacksmith,

A weak point in specialists.

and the person with the requisite skill and appliances for dealing with lead pipes is the plumber. But if the contemporary art of horseshoeing has a radical flaw in it, the carpenter, whose mind has not been prejudiced by mistaken instruction nor his natural gumption perverted by malpractice, may be a likelier man to detect it than the blacksmith. And so the gardener may see that the plumber's pipes are unsafe, the plumber's argument and usage among the best plumbers to the contrary notwithstanding.

And so, ordinarily sagacious people come to make instinctive allowance for the prejudices of learning, as they do for what the unlearned don't know. A valuable pocket of knowledge on some particular line of investigation is often acquired, like ambergris in whales, at the cost of a considerable degeneration of the rest of the creature. Even so great a man as Darwin had to give up such intellectual valuables as his taste for music and his interest in religion in exchange for what he learned about deep-sea fishes

and the habits of earth-worms. Medical specialists, especially, come in for a degree of chastened mistrust, and are in danger of being regarded as intellectual cripples whose minds, from too incessant application to one class of phenomena, get a list, as the mariners say, in that direction.

The point of all of which is, that humanity has a rational ground for appeal not only from the medical faculty, but from all high intellectual courts. Not only does perfect wisdom not lie in even the highest learning, but the cultivation of microscopic powers of the intellectual vision has a recognizable tendency to make the cultivator intellectually near-sighted. It is a tendency that is tacitly recognized day by day when we wonder if some person on whose insanity the experts have pronounced is really demented or not; or if there is really virtue in a remedy that the doctors say is bogus; or if there really are ghosts after all, or miraculous cures, though science says there can't be; or if the doctrine of evolution is a mistaken hypothesis, in

spite of all the wise men who believe in it.

In every-day practice it is wise for us to listen deferentially to the men of highest learning and to act upon their advice, but it is neither necessary nor even advisable to let the voice of authority wholly extinguish our speculations, since great practical benefit has come to the world in time past from the faith of the unlearned, and imaginings which authority has ridiculed have finally worked out into marvellously fruitful results.

Extenuating possibilities of irregular healing.

Undoubtedly our physicians do us good ; and indeed they ought to, even if they knew less and guessed less fortunately than they do, else were faith a much less potent virtue than it is declared to be. But it is one thing for us to flock of our own accord to the doctors, and quite another thing for those professional gentlemen to hold that we shall come to them and to none else, and that we may neither be legitimately born nor die legally, except with their concurrence. If we, being adults and possibly voters, want to prescribe for our own

infirmities, or have our neighbors prescribe for us, or try our luck with patent medicines, or have in faith-curers, Christian scientists, mind-curers, hypnotizers, or the representatives of any other school of therapeutic endeavor, does not our constitutional right to the pursuit of happiness warrant us in such experiments? There are many reasons for believing that it is wiser to trust a regularly educated physician than one that is irregularly educated or not educated at all, and unless the irregulars are in at the cure reasonably often they need not be much dreaded, for they will not get much custom.

If it relieves us to turn now and then from the traditional dangers of the regular physician's half-knowledge to the confident ignorance of the quack, is it quite fair to rule that there shall be no quacks for us to turn to? Every person with a new theory is a quack until the value of the theory is demonstrated, but if all the quacks are arbitrarily suppressed how are their theories to be tested? It is right enough that the

medical profession should be a despotism, but in the name of much that we know and much more that we hope to know, let Massachusetts hesitate before she forbids it to be a despotism tempered by quacks.

One danger on the other side is that misplaced confidence in "sure cures" or the infallibility of new-found methods may cause too-credulous people to ignore the dictates of common sense. For fear, for example, that the multiplication of patent processes for the extirpation of the rum habit may cause unwary individuals to suppose that it is no longer a strenuously undesirable habit to acquire, this seems a reasonable place to speak a few words on the subject of temperance. Temperance lecturers and foes of the demon rum have spoken exhaustively about the disadvantages of inebriety, but not half enough stress seems to have been laid hitherto on the great inconvenience of being incapacitated to enjoy the reasonable pleasures of drinking.

But be careful always.

There is a pretty general agreement of the authorities that a man who has once thoroughly abused his privileges as a wine-drinking animal, never can regain them. He can stop drinking altogether, but a moderate and wholesome use of wine is something which he may not safely attempt. If he does attempt it, conscientious persons will not like to drink with him, for, of course, there is no pleasure in sharing the cups of a man to whom alcohol, meshed in whatever sunshine, is a poison. A reformed drunkard is a great deal better than a drunkard who has not reformed, but, beside a man who has never needed reforming, he is a second-rate thing. One considerable source of legitimate gratification he has used up. There is a weak spot in him, and he must so govern his life as to keep it from undue exposure. He is not to drink the bride's health at the wedding, and even if his long-lost friend whom he hasn't seen since he left college happens into his office he cannot go out and have so much as a cocktail with him.

for it is troublesome to be reformed.

Of course, cocktails are detestable things to drink at all times, and thrice and four times detestable in office hours, but there are occasions when one's feelings seem to demand some reasonable disarrangement of the insides as an aid to expression. Perhaps it is a survival of the old habit of sacrifice that prompts a normal man to celebrate joyous occasions by some disturbance of his vital organs. At any rate, there is no doubt about the prompting, nor yet that the most feasible and ordinary expression it finds is in taking a drink—which is probably the foundation for Byron's celebrated aphorism, that

"There's naught no doubt so much the spirit calms
As rum and true religion."

It is a pity about the man who cannot conscientiously take a cocktail whenever a long-lost friend returns. It is a discomfort to him not to drink the baby's health at the christening; not to raise a brimming bumper to the bride at the wedding breakfast; not to roll back a decade or two when he sits down the

night before commencement with the remnant, still considerable, of the band who were young when he was. So far as this disuse of reasonable daily potations goes, the reformed man is no great loser, but possibly even a gainer, since the doctors are coming more and more to the opinion that, regarding merely the necessities of man's health, little or no alcohol is plenty enough for him. But with the great occasions it is different. There are not many of them. Not often at all does the conscientious workingman hear *nunc est bibendum* ringing in the familiar tones of his still, small voice.

To reform is indefinitely better than to be the creature of a perverted thirst, just as amputation is better than to succumb to gangrene; but the amputated limb is permanently off, and the undeniable inconvenience of not having it is to be added to the pain of amputation, as an excellent argument in favor of taking good care of it in the first place.

XI

MISSING SENSES AND NEW ONES

MISSING SENSES AND NEW ONES

A MAN died the other day of whom it was told, in all his obituary notices, that in his physical equipment there was this curious defect, that he could not hear the sound of S, or of the shrill notes. He would be walking in the street with a policeman at night sometimes, and would see the officer go through the motions of blowing a whistle. The whole neighborhood might echo with the shrill noise, but not a sound would reach him. That was bad, but it was a mere bagatelle compared with another thing that was the matter with him. The poor gentleman had the intellectual defect of being unable to see a joke, even when it took form in the newspaper of which he was editor. One day one of his reporters, in de-

Two senses that one man didn't have.

scribing an egg of extra size, mentioned that it had all been laid by one hen. He sent for that reporter next day and asked him if he really supposed that two hens could lay a single egg between them.

That two inabilities so curiously analogous should coexist in the same person furnishes an almost irresistible opportunity for the construction of didactic parallels. It is worth noting that the unfortunate gentleman was at great pains to remedy his physical defect and to obviate its consequences, but his intellectual—or would you call it spiritual? —infirmity he seems not to have attempted to cure. It shows how green our civilization still is, and how much the world has to learn, that no treatment has been devised to remedy a defective sense of humor. The deaf are taught to hear with their eyes, the dumb are taught to speak with their fingers and to talk actually with their vocal organs. If the blind have the least glimmer of light left to them the very utmost is made of it, but the man who

cannot see a joke gets no help at all, and is exceptionally lucky if he even meets with sympathy. Let us hope it will not be so much longer; but that by hypnotism, or Christian science, or some unexpected application of electricity, the seat of humor may be reached and quickened. Love is the great sweetener that makes living tolerable and dying a good deal more comfortable than most people think, but after love, is there any other corrective of existence that is fit to compare with humor? It greases the wheels so! It makes so many burdens endurable that must have been crushing without it!

And if the lack of it is detrimental to anyone, it is so above all others to an American. It will not be seriously disputed that Americans have the sense of humor more generally developed than any other people (unless it is the Irish); but of all people they need it most, for the wear and tear of American life is prodigious, and the best friends of the American climate do not vaunt it as a conservator of energy. Irish humor owes

its development, perhaps, to a protracted scarcity of the means of material enjoyment. Where people cannot find pleasure in what they possess, or what they consume, it behooves them to have what fun they may with what they think and say. And that the Irish do; as witness Mr. Frederic's report of a remark of the late Baron Dowse, that it was better to have a small career in Ireland than a great one in England, because in Ireland when one said funny things people comprehended them, and that made life worth living.

Of course, when humor overflows its limits, and from being an aid to serious existence becomes its end, it looses its savor and ceases to be of use. It is no longer humor, then, but something coarser and more material. It is not the grease on the wheels any more, but the load on the wagon. It is with humor as it is with piety, it is liable to degenerate into self-worship, and then it is all up with it. "Very great is the difference," severely says Noah Porter, "whether we see through the disguise, the look of

which the frivolous Bohemian can never rid himself, or the broad, swimming eyes of love with which Hood always looked through all his fun, or the sad earnestness into which Lamb relaxed as soon as he had stammered out his joke or his pun." Very great the difference, truly. The publican may have brought his sense of humor with him when he came out of the temple, but the Pharisee didn't. His was lost. Humor is inconsistent with his frame of mind.

Next to the sense of humor, which, after all, is only a branch of sight, the single sense that seems most indispensable to man's enjoyment, though not to his usefulness, is his hearing. The great majority of people can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. For the last three senses to be seriously impaired is uncommon. Multitudes of people have imperfect vision, but most of them are so helped by eye-glasses that they make out very well. Imperfect hearing is much less common than imperfect sight, but it is a much worse scrape when it

The accomplishment of agreeable deafness.

exists, because so little has been done to help it. If a man has any sight left in him at all, the spectacle-makers can fit him to enjoy the society and share the amusements of his fellows ; but if he is deaf, even in moderation, he may as well make up his mind to be in a considerable measure independent of society. It was a deaf person who was asked in what he took the most pleasure, and replied : " In reading, eating and drinking, the sight of my children, games and sports, and in the prospect of death." It was another deaf man who spoke of the measure of satisfaction he found in talking with a single companion ; but he added, " But hell comes into the room with the third person."

To be handsomely and agreeably deaf is a very elegant accomplishment, fit to exercise social talents of a high order. The person who aspires to it must check, in a considerable measure, a deaf person's natural tendency to shun society and flock by himself. He must continue to mix with his fellows, and when he does so, must in so far conceal his infirmity

as to make it a cause of discomfort to none but himself. However little he hears he must never seem unduly desirous to hear more, or yet indifferent to what is being said. However impossible it may be for him to take part in conversation he must neither permit himself to be bored nor to appear so. It is his business always to have the means of entertaining himself in his own head, so that while he continues in company his mind may be constantly and agreeably occupied, however little he may hear. In almost any company a deaf man to whom things that have been said have to be repeated is a check to free discourse ; a deaf man who is eager to hear and cannot is a discomforting sight ; a deaf man who is bored and wishes himself elsewhere is a depressing influence ; in either case he had better go elsewhere. The tolerable deaf man is one who, being in congenial company, can give pleasure by his mere presence, as he can take pleasure in merely having his friends about him. His thoughts must run, not on what he cannot hear, but on

what he sees and feels, and upon the ideas that come into his own mind. A deaf man who is always able to entertain himself, and who is always glad, and never over-anxious to know what is going on about him, has reasonable grounds for believing that at least he is not an incubus upon society. If to his negative accomplishments he can add the habit of having something worth hearing to say, he can even hope to be considered agreeable, and to have his society as welcome to ordinary selfish people as to the more benevolent.

Whether general society is worth cultivating on these terms is another question, and the opinion that there is more of self-discipline in it than amusement seems not without some basis. Still, deaf people are bound to keep as much alive as they can, and it does not do for people who want to keep alive to live a life of too much solitude. Therefore, it is a good plan for deaf people to cultivate a taste for anything that has a social side to it, but to the successful prosecution of which good hearing is not

essential. Women, on whom deafness doubtless bears more hardly than on men, and who usually bear it with better grace, are likely to find profit in cultivating, for one thing, a taste for dress; for good clothes look as well on a deaf woman as on another, and give as much pleasure to the wearer as if she could hear. Moreover, the gratification incident to fine raiment being incomplete until it has been shown, the possession of ravishing toilets is a constant and wholesome incentive to their owner to brave the discomforts of her infirmity and go among people who have eyes in their heads. The cultivation of the dress faculty is less important, but not unimportant, for men. Both men and women who are deaf do well to cultivate a taste for all sorts of games, intellectual and athletic. A deaf man can play whist, or chess, or watch a horse-race. So, too, he can ride a horse, pull an oar, wield a tennis-bat, shoot, bowl, golf, and, with proper coaching, be a useful member of a base-ball nine.

Deafness tends to the formation of

fixed habits of life. It is less exasperating at home than abroad ; among familiar scenes and faces than where every sight suggests a question, and reminds the would-be questioner that whatever answer he gets he will not hear it. The traveller needs all his faculties. The more he sees the more questions he wants to ask ; and the more new people he comes across, the more eager he is to test their quality. That is why the fool's paradise has a special snake in it for the deaf man. He can travel, of course, and get pleasure out of it, but he does it at a disadvantage, and will hardly choose it as an amusement exceptionally fit for him to cultivate.

But if there are some senses a man may lose, we are taught in these days that there are probably whole sets of them which he may hope sometime or other to attain. Some are to be regained; others he has never developed yet. A favorite contemporary explanation of human abilities that are so far out of common that they seem occult, is

the suggestion that they indicate the survival of senses or instincts that belonged to man in his earlier stages of development, and were lost as he progressed. The signs of such lost faculties, it is averred, are still to be seen in the lower animals, as when the carrier-pigeon shapes its flight without a compass, or a dog comes home a hundred miles across country without asking the way. The reason why such faculties have been lost to humanity is understood to be that men have ceased to need them. The development of language has permitted some to decay, and the decreased hazards of human existence have made others unnecessary, and they have disappeared through disuse. In their place have come special aptitudes suited to the new conditions of existence, such as the reading faculty, a miracle of optical training, but too common to be wondered at. That, though, fails a little of being a perfect illustration of these substituted faculties, because it is deliberately and methodically acquired. There are other faculties, and the signs and

promise of still others, which are more nearly analogous to the lost animal instincts in being a sub-conscious development, incident to the conveniences or the peculiar perils of contemporary human life. One such curious faculty is the familiar ability to awaken at a set time, which is an outgrowth of the multiplication of time-pieces and of the need of acting on the minute.

The cable-car and bridge instincts.

The existence of a still newer and more curious faculty was noted the other day by a newspaper correspondent, in a dissertation on contemporary existence as studied in the exceptionally contemporaneous city of Chicago. He remarks two developments of it, which he calls the bridge and cable-car instinct. A vast amount of daily local travel in Chicago crosses the Chicago River. But commerce makes constant use of the Chicago River, and the travel across it goes over draw-bridges. The well-known propensity of draw-bridges to be open when you want to cross them is reported to have developed, in some of the inhabitants of Chicago, an instinct

that admonishes them when a bridge that they are approaching is about to turn, so that they can hurry and cross it in time. What has stimulated the development of the bridge instinct is that in Chicago you must usually cross a bridge to catch a train, and to be "bridged" means usually to miss the train.

"In the same way," says the correspondent, "the man with the cable-car instinct can tell when a cable-car is coming, even when the bell does not ring, and so save his life." Of course there is a suggestion of humor about these cases, but there is nothing scientifically amiss about the development they attest. The growth of a cable-car instinct (which in many American cities will be a trolley-car instinct) is likely to be promoted as other instincts are, by the survival of the fittest. Just as the infant monkey who doesn't clutch the limb, falls and is killed, so the American street-babe, whose trolley-car instinct is defective, fails to grow up. Nor is it more to expect of the sub-conscious in-

telligence to take note of passing cars while the conscious mind is otherwise engrossed, than to expect the faculties of a sleeper to measure the lapse of time.

It is only within the present generation that the inability to see an electric current has been a source of peril to man. Surely we are entitled to look for an instinct that will meet that case too, so that a man may perceive what is going through a stray wire before he takes hold of it and gets killed.

XII

A SERIOUS TIME OF LIFE

A SERIOUS TIME OF LIFE

THAT is a serious time of life when you begin to realize that the man you are is not the man you hope to become, but the man you have shown yourself to be; a definite quantity with precise limitations, and not a great one. We all compare ourselves at greater or less distances with people in books and in history. There is a time when it is a delightful reassurance to learn from the lives of Keats, Pitt, Hamilton, or Henry Clay, that we are not too young to be famous, and that men no older than we have immortalized themselves as poets or as statesmen. Again there comes a time when we go to books for reassurances of another sort, and pluck up our fainting hopes as we read how Grant, Sherman, Cromwell, and Nathaniel Hawthorne

That awkward period when you "haven't done anything yet."

reached our time of life without distinguishing themselves beyond common, and yet lived to take rank among the immortals. There may be hope for us, we feel, for all of our forty odd years. And yet the late-blooming soldiers should not encourage us unduly, for a great soldier is only developed by war, and war, through no fault of his, may be very long in coming.

The serious time of disquieting realization comes to a man between these other two seasons. He has passed the time when any deficiencies in his work are palliated by his youth. Nobody can speak of him as "promising" any more. His blossoms are no longer a credit to him; he must show fruit, or admit that he has none to show, recognizing that the natural inference based on experience is that a man of his age who has done nothing that conspicuously justifies his existence never will do anything of that sort. A reasonable progress is still possible to him, of course, but in the natural course it is expected to be the continuation and perfection of what

is behind him. A new quality, new phases of character, unsuspected talent, he *may* develop, but no one expects him to. If he himself expects to, it must be because he knows more about himself than he has disclosed. The story of the friend of William H. Prescott, who regretted that that gentleman's abilities were being put to no considerable use is a case in point. Prescott was approaching the serious period without showing any results. The reason was that he was at work on a ten-year task of history writing. Presently the results came all together.

Ordinarily we do not look for matured fruits of a man's intelligence before he is thirty-five. Before that age he is at liberty to be clever. From then to forty is, in most cases, the serious time when he must do something important or else submit to be stamped as ordinary. If he cannot show power before he is forty, no one, except perhaps his wife, is going to believe it is in him. He cannot expect to be rated after that either by his hopes or his aspirations.

A good many men, conscious of their impending doom, gather their forces during this period for a sink-or-swim struggle to assert themselves, and put their fate to the final touch. Among those who succeed the most usual sort of success is financial. Men who get very rich are apt to make their fortunes late in life. Whatever the sort of success, though, that comes after forty, whether it pertains to art, or literature, or generalship, or statesmanship, or finance, it is but the harvesting of a crop already sown. Men's purpose after the serious time is to reap what they have consciously or unconsciously sown, and carry what they have got to the most advantageous market. It is the discovery of a fit market rather than the production of different commodities, that has been at the bottom of most of the success that has seemed late-won.

There are some persons of more than the average abilities who will excuse themselves for approaching the serious time of life without any very noted ac-

complishment, on the ground that they have always had to drudge, and have never had any spare time. It may be that in some cases the excuse will be valid. There was a man once, as everyone will remember, who expressed himself as indifferent to the necessaries of life if he could only have its luxuries. It is a mere subdivision of his sentiment to say, "Give us our spare time, and we don't care what becomes of the rest."

The great usefulness and value of spare time.

It must seem sometimes to everyone who accomplishes anything, that whatever he does that is really worth while has to be done in his spare time. It seems to be the intention that what a man does in the way of a regular task shall just about keep him alive and enable him to hold his own ; and that whatever progress he makes, if he makes any, is to result from his use of his leisure. Of course, there is no particular fun in plodding, every-day task-work, and, of course, there is a great deal that is exhilarating in progress ; so it is reasonable enough for anyone to value the half-hours he gets ahead in, more than the

hours he spends in merely keeping up. There was an excellent illustration of the superiority of the fruits of leisure in the story that is told of Lowell's grateful reply to the young man who thanked him on his seventieth birthday for what he had done as a teacher. "I am glad you said that; I've been wondering if I hadn't wasted half my life." He might have been sure, though, that his teaching time had not been wasted, even if the taught had made no sign; for teaching was his task, and without a task there is no such thing as spare time, and the things a man can only do in spare hours never get done at all.

It was complained at the New York Horse Show last fall, that the horses could not jump properly because there was no chance to warm them up. A horse who has it in him to jump seven feet isn't going to do it off-hand as he comes from his stall. He is more likely to do it after reasonable exercise at five and six feet. The less jumps don't tell in his record, but they do in his legs. Of course, there can be too much of a good

thing, and it is possible to get all the jump out of him over four-foot hurdles. In like manner, it is possible for clever people to drudge away their wits. "No task no spare time; no spare time no progress," is the rule; but it has to be remembered that, so far as progress is concerned, too much task may prove, at least, as bad as none.

Of course, being human, we all want the benefits of spare time without the trouble of hoarding it. Most of us grumble about the strength we waste over unprofitable tasks, and think with greed of the enormous progress that we would make if we could afford or dared to put in all our time in doing what was really progressive. Some of us, having the courage of our convictions, do achieve increased leisure, and put it to good use; but I suspect that most of us need some sort of compulsion to put our machinery in motion, and find that when our other tasks have been abandoned our spare time becomes a task itself and loses its character, so that its products are not the same. A case that is familiar

is that of Charles Lamb, eminent among the conservators of spare time, who longed so ardently for his release from his clerk's desk, and finally found his increased leisure so troublesome a boon.

Novels have been written in the spare time of their authors, but people who get very far into novel-writing are apt to make that their task and find other occupation for their leisure. Novel-writing is rather too continuous to be an ideal spare-time employment. It isn't one of those things, like religion, in which people often seem to make better progress by working odd half-hours than others do who devote their whole time to it.

A razor doesn't need as much grinding as a broad-axe, and it appears that a very moderate task is sufficient to put some people in perfect condition to use spare time to the greatest advantage ; which amounts to the same as saying that practically all the work of such persons is directly progressive. When a man reaches the point where he requires no tasks, can improve only three or four of his spare hours daily, and can conscientiously loaf

and invite his soul the rest of the time, he has attained an enviable pitch of human felicity. Old men are that way sometimes; particularly aged poets. There is a theory that the imagination thrives on leisure, and that imaginative writers profit better by being very moderate in their daily demands on their wits. A favorite illustration of this theory is the reported case of a New Jersey novelist, of high contemporary renown, who writes two hours a day, and has the rest of his time to spare. Nature furnishes a parallel case in the geysers of the Yellowstone, some of which take twenty-three hours to get ready and only spout fifteen minutes.

But spare time, when it comes in such bulk, ceases to be a luxury, and it usually happens that men who have no set tasks make tasks for themselves, and burden themselves with horses, or the care of property, or politics, or yachts, or hunting, or courtship, or flirtation; being willing to endure some pretence of a regular occupation, for the sake of its blessed intermissions.

XIII

THE QUESTION OF AN OCCUPATION

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ONE of the ingenious persons who make interesting paragraphs in the newspapers, put into a Boston paper, the other day, a tale of a well-to-do gentleman who had a son. For whom, when he came of age and had finished with the customary educational preliminaries, his father cast about for an occupation; and himself having no business except to nurse his income, he wrote to twenty-four friends whose industrial efforts had resulted successfully, asking each what he thought was a good business, or profession, for a youth to start in. The paragrapher's story is that each correspondent, in his reply, complained of his own calling, and advised the inquirer to try something else. Whereat

Nobody likes his own job.

the father was disconcerted, and at last account the son was still idle.

The story is reasonable enough to be true. It seems not to lie in the average man who knows what success in his particular line of activity has cost him, to believe easily in another person's ability to pay the necessary price, escape fatal misadventures, and be favored by the indispensable lucky chances. Moreover, the thing that he has done looks small to him when he recalls the continuousness of the effort that accomplished it. When he makes his estimate of results he usually counts in dollars and cents, and is apt to overlook what every sincere moralist is bound to regard as the most important result of all, the effect of his exertions upon himself. The effort which has made him "successful" in the more limited sense, has developed his strength and his manhood. That was, or should have been, the result that the inquiring Boston parent sought for his son. Recognizing that to nurse an income is an old-gentlemanly avocation, and hardly fit to bring out the latent qualities of youth,

he wanted, doubtless, to put his youngster somewhere where burden-bearing would make him sturdy; but, like the rest of us, he wanted the sturdiness to be incident to the acquisition of satisfactory pecuniary gains.

Generally speaking, our American conception of profitable work is still something that makes direct cash returns. We are perfectly aware that character is valuable, and that hard work is almost indispensable to its growth, yet our impulse is to measure the value of labor in coin. Even when we don't need, or really care about, the money our work might bring, we are apt to persist, from mere force of habit, in measuring it primarily by this standard, and secondarily, if at all, by its results in ourselves. The truth is, as the experience of the Boston father illustrates, that there is scarcely any calling the mere money returns of which will seem to its successful professors worth the pains they have cost. "I have had to work at this job;" each of the Boston man's correspondents seems to have said; "I had no choice,

for I had to make a living. But with your son it is different. He can afford to choose something else."

There is one sort of occupation for the well-to-do which does not get the credit that fairly belongs to it. It is a prevalent sentiment that men who have money enough should get out of business. What is the use, the feeling is, of going on and making more money when you have enough already? But though a business at which money is not made is not a good business to be in, there is a great deal more in business than mere money making. A man who buys and sells, or manufactures and sells, is bound to keep in touch with his fellow-beings. He is bound, too, to keep his wits about him and to stay alive; so long as he has control of important commercial interests he has power, and the more complete his control, and the greater the interests subject to it, the greater the power. There is no other high inducement for a man of leisure to go into politics, except to acquire power and use it wisely; and if he can get more power

The convenience of having a business in the family.

in selling groceries or meat, or making paper or cloth or soap, or running railroads or banks, it seems a bootless change for him to abandon those occupations, or fail to train his sons in them, merely because they are money-making employments and he has money enough.

No family is so rich that it can afford not to work. If its members cannot work at what they wish to, they should do what poorer people have to do, and work at what they can. The American sentiment that everyone ought to have something to do, is a sound sentiment, and the Americans who live up to it are the ones who are the most useful to their country at home and most creditable to it abroad. Accordingly, a family with an hereditary business seems to be in an exceptionally felicitous situation. Such a family not only has possession of an industrial machine that will produce an income, but it has a training-school for its young men, and a constant incentive to perpetuate itself and keep up its standard as a family. It is an advantage about a business that it is exacting. A

family may own townships in the country, or squares in town, or have advantageous collections of securities in the vaults of a bank. Either of these possessions will stand a reasonable amount of neglect without very serious detriment, but a family with a business has got to sit up with it. Such a family can have its full share of play, but it cannot give itself over wholly to the demoralizing pursuit of pleasure. It has responsibilities, neglect of which is too perilous to be risked. Fortune has its hostages. It must keep up with the times or be run over.

To be sure, the brains of the family may run out, or its energies fail; and in that case the business that has been its feeder may quickly become a drain. If the family has gone hopelessly to seed, of course the sooner it gets out of active life the better. To close out its business then, is common sense It is quite a different matter to cut loose from it while the family is still strong, and shows no signs of enfeeblement. That is to invite degeneration, to throw away the apparatus by which the family has got its

strength, and wait for sloth to overwhelm it.

But there are many rich families that got rich out of land or stocks, and have no hereditary family business. Every year the American colleges are turning loose increasing numbers of the scions of such houses with the elements of education in them, but with ready-made incomes large enough to live on, and no inherited business obligation, nor any special propensity toward any particular kind of work. A particular field in which all good Americans hope to see such young men venture is politics, and especially municipal politics. If the American young man who loves his work for his work's sake, and need not get his bread by it, should elect to take a hand in the government of cities, the result might be comforting to that respectable body of citizens who are tired of being governed by men who are in that business primarily because they find it a source of income. Of course, when the man who loves his work for his work's

Politics might do,

sake comes into competition in municipal politics, as elsewhere, with the man who is working for his dinner, his coat must come off, metaphorically speaking, if he is to accomplish anything. That is the beauty of it. It would be hard work; harder than yacht-racing or even polo; less vainly amusing, and less cheaply glorious, and fitter, on that account, to satisfy the aspirations of an energetic and devoted spirit.

if we hadn't such a mean opinion of all politicians.

But for all that, theoretically, we expect our youth to go into politics and hope they will, it cannot be said for us that we give them any urgent amount of practical encouragement. At the close of a dinner given the other day by the friends of an eminent railroad president, to celebrate his completion of a quarter of a century of railroad work, the beneficiary got on unaccustomed legs and told how it was that he happened to be a railroad man at all. He had been a lawyer, he said, with decided leanings toward political life, and prospects of political success, when two eminent railroad men, a father and his son, approached

him. The son said : " We want your services." The father said : " Politics don't pay. The business of the future in this country is railroading." The upshot of it was that he dropped politics in great measure, and became the attorney for the railroad of which he afterward became president. The moral of Mr. Depew's story seemed to be that he was a brand snatched from the burning, and that Commodore Vanderbilt's word fitly spoken had turned him from certain disappointment and sorrow to a success that was worth while.

The fable teaches, or at least suggests, how very much we Americans expect of our politicians. Nine-tenths of us are ready to admit that Commodore Vanderbilt's observation was accurately truthful, and to consider Mr. Depew's present position many times more felicitous than it could have been if he had not accepted the Commodore's dictum and taken his advice. We, too, believe that politics don't pay, and we do our best to make the facts justify that opinion. We take it for granted that if a

man can do anything else, he had better keep out of politics, and that if a man of ability does go into politics he is wasting his opportunities, and is probably something of a rascal as well. We not only believe that our contemporary politics are dirty work, but by our attitude toward them we insist that they shall be dirty work. If there is anything in public life that is worth attaining, we want to see it go to someone who is not a politician. We want our collectors and postmasters to be business men who have proved their competence by sticking close to business. We want our foreign ministers to be gentlemen of polish, skilled in letters and languages, and uncontaminated with too much familiarity with electioneering methods. We know that governors and presidents cannot be elected without organization, but we insist that the proper men for those offices are men who are not subject to the sordid influences of a "machine." Our ideal public officer is a person who reluctantly permits himself to be dragged from the consideration of his private affairs to serve

the public. Sharing Commodore Vanderbilt's frank opinion that "politics don't pay," we regard a young man who proposes any sacrifice of his pecuniary prospects to the hope of a public career with much the same sort of pitying contempt that is accorded to the business man who neglects legitimate sources of emolument for the disastrous excitements of the bucket-shop. We believe that a system by which the politicians get the offices is a corrupt system, and yet we are aware that the offices and the consciousness of duty done are the only rewards that political industry can honestly attain; and we know, besides, that political endeavor takes time, and that the consciousness of duty done will not support mundane life. If a man neglects his chances of worldly well-being to carry the Gospel to the unconverted, we think he is a saint; but if he neglects them to carry the ward, we think he is a fool, or if not, a knave anyhow; and yet a country's political salvation is hardly less important than the salvation of its individual citizens, nor should politics be ranked

much behind religion in the opportunities they offer to a devoted soul.

Of course there is some excuse for us. The rapid development of the resources of a great country, with concurrent accumulation of great fortunes and multiplication of opportunities for money-making, have thrown the political profession into the shade. It has been found, especially in the cities, that offices as a means of livelihood have had attractions chiefly for second- or third-rate men, who have done much to justify our low opinion of politicians in general. In the country districts, where money-making has been slower, office-holding has charms for a better class of men, and has kept in better repute. But both in and out of cities there is reason to believe that the professional politician does a great deal better by us than we have any title to expect.

We scorn his avocation, and are always ready to believe that he follows it from the lowest motives. We do not want to do his work ourselves; that would take too much time and be too much

trouble. We are willing that he should do the work, but if there are any legitimate office-holding emoluments of the work done, we want some "respectable person" in whom we have confidence to have them. Verily, the professional politician, when he comes to consider what we think of him, what we expect of him, and what we are willing that he should get, must be amazed at our assurance.

But perhaps politics will pay better presently; if not absolutely better, at least relatively, because other things won't pay so well. And of course, when politics pay as well as law, and medicine, and drygoods, and the wholesale grocery business, we shall be able, without self-reproach or a loss of reputation, to take to them ourselves, and drive the politicians out.

A provision for age.

To find a fit occupation for one's working years is in the nature of a timely provision for old age. But there are other provisions of that nature, which should be made in time too, and are hardly less important.

When a man is planning for the comfort of his mature and declining years, there are some things that he arranges for as matters of course. He will try to plan so that he may have an income proportionate to his habits of expenditure as long as he lives, and he will arrange, if possible, to have the income continue just the same to himself or his heirs after he is tired and stops working. He will be apt to try to arrange also to have a wife to grow old with, and to have children about him, in various convenient stages of development, to keep him in touch with contemporary life. And he will form the whist habit or the habit of reading books, and take reasonable measures not to have gout, or dyspepsia, or any unreasonable affection of the liver.

Such precautions any prudent man will take as he sees the propriety of them, and many others too; but there are one or two comforts that he may miss by not appreciating their value until it is too late to provide for them. A particular luxury of this sort, for which a timely arrangement must be made if a man is to

have it at all, is a periodical meeting with the men who were young when he was. In order to secure this enjoyment, it is necessary, in the first place, to be young with a considerable number of persons associated in the pursuit of some common interest, and to form more or less intimate relations with them. They must be the right sort of people, too; people whom it is not only edifying to know while they are young, but who promise a development which will make a fair proportion of them good company in their maturity. Having formed such an acquaintance betimes, the habit of renewing it periodically should be started early and carefully nursed, the periods growing gradually less until they become annual.

The simplest way to accomplish all this is doubtless to go early in life to a good college, and return yearly to its Commencements. But where that has not been feasible, the same end is often otherwise accomplished, as by being a veteran of the war, and meeting one's fellow-veterans annually at a Grand Army

Encampment; or by being an earnest politician and getting sent pretty regularly to conventions. The points that require attention are, that you must meet old friends who were young, or comparatively young, in your company, and from whom you are ordinarily separated. The old friends whom you meet every day won't do. You talk to them, when you see them, about what happened yesterday and was in the morning paper. The sight of them does not annihilate time for you; your intercourse with them has been too constantly contemporaneous for that. But the old acquaintances whom you only see once a year carry you back every time to the years when you first knew them.

It is a valuable refreshment to the spirit to be thus transported, and one which rightly constituted persons prize with increasing appreciation as the years pile up on them. After a man has found his vocation and got into the rut of it, existence comes to smack too much of the tread-mill, and a sensation that is quickening and pervasive, and out of his

every-day experience, is the more welcome and the more reviving to him in proportion to the increase of the difficulty in finding it.

Therefore, if you intend to be happy though old, form the habit early of regular attendance on some periodical function. Have a taste for something in particular, and stick to it until the other enthusiasts on the subject are old acquaintances. Then meet them persistently once a year, and presently you will have a habit that will be of real value to you when you have passed the time for making new friends.

XIV

WOMEN AND FAMILIES

WOMEN AND FAMILIES

MR. GRANT ALLEN has been averring in the magazines, that we are not giving our young women the right sort of education; and this not because our educational machinery cannot do what is expected of it, but because the thing that is expected is the wrong thing. He declares that the aim and result of female education in America and England is to make sprightly and intelligent spinsters, whereas what ought to be its aim is, not to make spinsters at all, but to educate young women with a view to their becoming wives and mothers. Mr. Allen declares that, while it is essential to the best interests of the state that ninety-something women out of every hundred should get married and have not less than four children apiece, and while an overwhelming majority of the

Mr. Grant Allen calls for mothers.

women do get married, the whole hundred women are educated with a view to the best interests of a half-dozen or less of them, who become old maids. Mr. Allen's blood boils at this, and he says flatly that the women who do not marry, though charming possibly as individuals, are socially and politically of no account in comparison with those who do. *Mothers* are what the country needs, he says, and he calls for them with the energy of a foundling asylum, while he avers that literary women, school-mistresses, hospital nurses, and lecturers on cookery are the natural product of our system of education as it is. He does not deny that these are useful products, but he does deny that the system that produces them fits our needs.

Mr. Allen also records his fears that if the theories of the advanced women are not checked, the invaluable faculty of intuition, which is a distinguishing feminine characteristic, will be educated away, with the direful result that men of genius will cease to be born. For the intuitive faculty pertains to genius as

well as to femininity. Genius does not stop to reason. It arrives, by a sudden and immediate process which it inherited from its mother. It knows, it knows not how. It only knows that it knows, as women do.

It would be a dreadful pity to have genius stumbling about in limbo for lack of a woman fit to be a mother to it. Let us hope it will not really come to such a forlorn extreme as that. Would it be inexcusable to derive the impression from Mr. Grant Allen's forebodings, that, learned as he is in natural history, his knowledge of the human female is defective? To my mind she seems to be constructed of much tougher materials than Mr. Allen imagines, and the influences that tend to make a man of her seem enormously overbalanced by those whose tendency is to keep her a woman. For my part I am not a bit afraid but that when God made woman He endowed her with persistence enough to maintain the characteristics of her sex. Monkeys may have evolutionized into Herbert Spencers, but

He fears that woman will abandon her sex.

have the females of any species ever yet evolutionized into males? Of course, there are masculine women; women afflicted from birth with mannish minds and predisposed to channels of usefulness which are more commonly navigated by men. Such women are not all Sally Brasses either. Some of them even presume to marry and have children. But they are exceptional creatures, and are easily counter-balanced by the feminine men. The average woman is a thorough-going female, and is not to be educated out of it. You may teach her Latin, you may let her operate a type-writer, or teach school, or work in a factory, or dot off language by telegraph, and become as independent as you please. She is a persistent female still.

Mr. Allen is so much in the habit of knowing what he is writing about, that it is not safe to enter any general denial of the truth of what he says about the schools, but he seems to blame, for the condition that he condemns, those exceptional and comparatively unimpor-

tant spinsters who are supposed to benefit by it. A wiser theory appears to be that in this case, as in most others, if there is anything wrong about women and their concerns it is the fault of the men. So prevalent among women is the amiable wish to please the lords of creation, that it may reasonably be doubted whether they ever do anything amiss the motive for which cannot be traced to this desire. Though Eve ate the forbidden fruit, it is nowhere denied that Adam had twitted her about the comparative unimportance of her attainments, and had bred in her a restless appetite for miscellaneous learning which made her the serpent's easy prey. Is it not so with our female education? If there is anything wrong with it, are not the men to blame? Our girls cannot be mothers and have the four children apiece that Mr. Allen calls for until they have first become wives, and, in order that they may become wives, it is important that they shall be educated on such a system as will produce results such as men most admire. If it is true, as Mr. Allen

A possible danger.

says, that the present system produces literary women, school-mistresses, and lecturers on cookery, it will probably be found, on investigation, that it is precisely those species of educated female that the unmarried male most affects. No doubt female education is all wrong if Mr. Allen says it is, but before he sets it right let him consider whether a safer way is not to try and teach a wiser discrimination to his males. To find as the result of an educational experiment that he has a lot of young women on his hands when his men are not disposed to marry, would be an awful result; the more so because his girls, being all educated to be mothers, might lack the special training necessary to spinsterial success.

and a remedy.

If Mr. Allen will only stir up his males, and see to it that they are competent, faithful, good providers, and endowed with approved notions as to the selection of mates, he may cease to distress himself. The proportion of the gentler sex who insist upon reasoning by logical processes, and competing with

men in bread-winning avocations, will not be great enough to afford him legitimate distress. Take care of your men, Mr. Allen, and your women won't have to take care of themselves. And if they don't have to, they won't do it. The fact that some women who have no one else to take care of them are taught to take care of themselves, seems a remote reason for alarm. A woman even with blunted intuitions is better than a woman under six feet of earth.

Mr. Warner also prefers charges,

Directly in the face of Mr. Grant Allen's complaint that culture is monopolizing the female, comes the assertion of Mr. Charles Dudley Warner that the American female is monopolizing American culture. Mr. Warner, who is a literary man and interested in the sale of books, has, possibly, acted from interested motives in letting loose this alarming theory. He has observed the tendency of young females of this generation to aggregate themselves into groups, meeting weekly for the cultivation of what by the courtesy of the

males they are permitted to term their intellectuals. Because young women run to clubs and associations as they do, he would have us believe that they are doing about all the reading that is being done, and are getting the bulk of the culture, bating a few stray spears of it that ministers and professional literary men pick up in the exercise of their callings. Mr. Warner insinuates that the men occupy their working hours in money-making, and that their conversation in moments of recreation tends to relate to matters connected with business, varied by such topics as "horse" and feeding, and he assumes to have forebodings as to what the contemporary young man's feelings will be when some girl undertakes some time to talk to him about some new book.

No one can safely tell Mr. Warner that he does not know anything. The Hartford editor is too considerable a gun to be spiked in any such peremptory manner. But one may venture to say softly that he ought to know better

than to be scared at the thought of those clubs. As an expert in feminine traits, he should need no one to tell him that it is the instinct of the average young female to do things collectively. He seems to think that she gets up clubs because she likes books. Simple male! The truth is that she gets up literature because she likes clubs. She will take up with anything, from Browning to working-girls, that gives her occasion to aggregate herself of a morning with other young females and taste the sweets of companionship.

Not that one can blame her! Far from it. Woman, poor thing, as a rule can't go to an office. Her day's work is an irregular sort of a job that keeps her more or less at home. Her clubs and classes take her out, give her set occupation, wake up her faculties and do her good of very much the same sort that a man gets from selling coal or stocks, or discussing measures to keep the moths out of last winter's unsold woollens. But the idea that she learns so

much as to make the men uncomfortable is a mistake. She will impart to some young man, in the first place, everything that she gathered in at her club, and he will get the benefit of it. And in the next place, the only people who get hold of book knowledge enough to make anyone uncomfortable are those who read at home to themselves, in their odd minutes and their even hours, because they like it.

which is mean of him.

From a professional point of view, it is mean for Mr. Warner to go back on his men. They are his true friends and supporters. If a man wants to read a book he buys it, and if he likes it he buys six more copies and gives them (not all the same day, of course) to six women whose intelligence he respects. But if a club of fifteen girls determine to read a book, do they buy fifteen copies? No. Do they buy five copies? No. Do they buy—no, they don't buy at all; they borrow a copy. It doesn't lie in womankind to spend money for books, unless they are meant to be a gift for some man.

And apropos of literature and petticoats, an accomplished critic, who recently discussed in a contemporary magazine the needs and possibilities of American fiction, declared that the coming woman in American novels was the married woman. The novel of the future, this gentleman thinks, will begin where the contemporary novel ends, at marriage. He declares that it is vain to hope to make great stories about young maidens whose experience of life is necessarily limited, and whose ideas and emotions are bounded by their experience. Women of maturity, the wives and mothers of humanity, are bound to be a great deal more interesting from their greater experience of life, and are vastly fitter to be the leading figures in the searching and comprehensive fiction soon to come. The married woman, our critic insists, is not only to be the heroine of the future American novel, but she is to write it too; since in the polite circles, it seems, where married women have leisure and opportunity to make themselves of interest, women are the

Will the coming woman in fiction be married?

only members in whom are combined the knowledge, taste, and leisure requisite for the task.

It is undeniable that married women of reasonable maturity have commonly seen more of life, and know more that is worth narrating than the damsels whose wooing forms the staple of modern tales. None the less, as a subject of fiction, the maid has several decided advantages over the matron. In stories where the heroine is to scour the Spanish Main for pirates, or head exciting quests for buried treasure, a previous matrimonial experience is a matter of indifference, and a matron will do at least as well as a maid. But where the substance of the story concerns the development of affection between a man and a woman, to start with a marriage is apt to make awkward work. Who is the heroine to fall in love with? Her husband? No; that seems not to be the intention. Some other woman's husband? More than likely; or, if not, with some single gentleman of means and defective occupation. But for a

married woman to have a man in love with her whom she cannot marry is a misfortune, and for her to fall in love with a man not her husband is mischievous. Such a predicament may be excusable in an occasional story, as such predicaments are occasionally excusable in real life; but that the American fiction of the future is to be a record of this type of hazardous experience of women is a gloomy prospect indeed, and one in which I do not believe. If the married woman is to be the heroine of the coming novel, it must turn on something besides love-making. It must be the story of her career; of her professional or political success; of her painful accession through toilsome decades to the front rank of the doctors; of the money she made, and what she did with it. American women are very much alive in these days. There is no special difficulty about writing interesting books about them without using men at all, except as puppets or lay figures.

XV

AS TO DEATH

AS TO DEATH

SO many people are dying these days, said a writer of a letter of condolence during a recent epidemic of the grip, "that one feels like apologizing for being alive." "I have lost my confidence in life," said a parent whose fold pneumonia had broken into. "So have I, in a measure," was the reply! "but I find my confidence in death correspondingly strengthened."

We are very slow about gaining confidence in death—curiously slow, considering how familiar our acquaintance with it is. And yet life is an exceeding complicated task, and death, to us who have not tried it, seems wonderfully concise and simple. No complaints come from those who have died, and, what is more to the point, very few shadows of dissatisfaction are seen to

hover over the dying. The dread and discontent with death is in the living. Doctors tell us that the dying rarely fear the change which they feel approaching. Afar-off death is a monster, but brought near to it is usually divested of its horror, and becomes manifest as the natural thing that it is.

We make far too much ado about it. To have friendship and companionship go out of our lives is a real loss, and our grief for that is a natural feeling which we would not wish, as we need not hope, to be rid of. But the sensation of vague woe which survives all our experience and all our intelligent conceptions of the matter, is something to be recognized and overcome. The instinctive feeling, that a person who has died is the victim of great misfortune, and that we who survive have unwillingly got the better of him, is a sensation that civilized and religious people ought to get over. "Poor John," we say, "poor Mary," and deck ourselves in black, which nine times out of ten, whatever we may think about it, is the expression

of our realization that a dreadful thing has happened—not to us, but to someone whom we love. If we ceased feeling sorry for those who are lost to us, and could confine ourselves to mourning for ourselves whose the loss is, we should conduct ourselves much more nearly in accordance with the facts as we know them.

Nothing that we know about death warrants us in thinking so meanly of it as we do. It is unfortunate for its reputation that it is associated with pain, sickness, and the demoralization of our faculties. Inevitably, it shares the reputation of the company it keeps. If it were something that we attained as the ultimate triumph of our fullest strength and energy, we should be bound to think better of it. And yet there is no conception of death which is tolerable or reasonable, which does not involve the belief that it is promotion. When character seems perfected, and achievement absolute, it is the next step ; when character, still far short of perfection, seems to have ceased to progress, and honor-

able achievement from whatever cause seems barred, it is a change which at least gives ground for renewed hope. Of some who die, we are sure that the transition was from one sphere of useful and progressive activity to another. As to others, we feel that, so far as we see, it was a gain for them to be rid of flesh that seemed to clog their spirits, and perhaps to drag them down. Looking at people with open eyes and reasonably full knowledge, and weighing what life brings them with the penalties they have to pay, there will not be so very many of whom we shall feel sure—even with our natural prejudice in favor of a certainty that we know as against a chance that we surmise about—that they possess so much as not to afford to take the chance.

Effort! is not that the finest thing in life? Effort that trains the mind, that trains and subjugates the body, that controls and directs the temper, that makes character! Is life without effort of value? Is life valuable when effort ceases to be possible? And yet life that

is yoked so to effort surely gets to be a weary business, first or last. "This rest is glorious!" said John Ericsson, on his death-bed. There was no grumbling there! Too much hard work had been done to admit of that.

"Gladly I lived, and gladly I die," was the sentiment of the confident spirit whose epitaph Mr. Stephenson undertook to provide. That is the right feeling. We are not half glad enough to be alive, not nearly as pleased as we should be at the prospect of dying. We should form our opinions of death less by its concomitants immediately on this side of the grave, and much more by the splendid company of the brave, the kind, the wise, and the true, who know what we can only guess about its benefits.

XVI

INCLINATIONS AND CHARACTER

INCLINATIONS AND CHARACTER

IN its eulogy of a famous and beloved American, who died the other day, a contemporary newspaper remarked that "he was one of those fortunate creatures who seem never to be compelled to do anything that is contrary to their inclinations." That Mr. Curtis should have so impressed a coeval observer recalls Lowell's estimate of his friend,

> Whose Wit with Fancy arm in arm,
> Masks half its muscle in its skill to charm.

As illustrated in the case of Mr. Curtis.

If he seemed to do nothing that he did not wish to do, no doubt it was partly because he brought a gracious performance to even unacceptable tasks; but the other reason may well have been

that his inclinations were so uplifted and disciplined that he could afford to follow them, and that in following straightly after duty he had approached that enviable elevation where

> Love is an unerring light,
> And joy its own security.

Hardly any better fortune can come to a conscientious man than to find his inclinations fit and feasible to follow. In many cases it happens, through no fault of his, that he cannot do what he wants to. Obligations are laid upon him that he is bound to discharge, and in discharging them he has to turn his face whither he would not choose to go, and do the work that is put before him rather than that his heart is in. But in very many other cases the choice is within his reach, if only he has the manhood to make it and the resolution to stick to it. If there are lions in his path he must have grit enough to drive them out of it, even though that is a tedious process. When the choice is a high choice, and

the man is a strong man in earnest, the lions have to move out. The average man, of course, prefers to go round them, even though the détour gets him into byways that are not of his choice.

By far the most potent factor in these days in luring high-minded and able men from doing the work of their choice, is the superior opportunity of money-making in other directions. That avails too often to win born-writers away from letters, and to keep born-statesmen out of politics, and born-preachers out of the pulpit. To most Americans poverty is not absolute but relative; not a matter involving the necessaries and reasonable comforts of life, but the question of living on an equal scale of luxury with one's associates. Many men to whom high-thinking might have been possible, have suffered an aversion to plain-living to turn their intellectual energies into more commonplace channels. Many others, who cared little for luxuries for themselves, have drudged, and humbled their talents, to procure them for their fami-

lies. It was said not long ago of Beaconsfield, in contrasting him with Salisbury, that "He possessed nothing, and he did not want to possess anything. He never really owned an acre of land in his life, and if he had just enough money for current expenses he was thankful not to be troubled with more."

If that was truly his disposition, it was a superlatively fortunate endowment for an intellectual man who had no mind to do what was contrary to his inclinations.

Inclinations of so high an order that their fulfilment brings contentment and honor, and of so stanch a quality that they can withstand allurements of wealth, ease, or office bought at any cost of independence, are so essentially a part of the individual who possesses them, that they may be accurately and more succinctly defined as character. Men who have such inclinations are not common, but men who follow them out are rare. If Mr. Curtis followed his, it was up the hill and over it. He even voluntarily placed between himself and

their fulfilment the gratuitous obstacle of a great debt for which he was neither in law nor in equity responsible. They led him away from allies of life-long association, through much that was hazardous, and much that was disagreeable. He followed them with admirable constancy. To have possessed such inclinations was not an incident but an achievement, and to have followed them out was victory — a victory whose richest fruit was that it gave to American citizenship an ideal Independent.

In some instances lofty inclinations develop into character; in others they do not. So common among men is the case of inclinations that seem to have no practical force, that a contemporary observer announces, as a result of notice taken, that some men have morals, and others principles. Of course, it happens occasionally that people have both, as others again have neither; but, according to the experience of the observer in question, such cases are more or less exceptional. He cites instances of politi-

Some men have principles, and others morals.

cians, the most scrupulous in their private practices, and most unprincipled in their political acts, and contrasts them with other politicians of the severest political morality, but not immaculate in all their personal relations. There are so many cases of eminently moral men who lacked political virtue, and so many more of immoral men who had it, that historical research can easily take such a turn as to leave the seeker wondering whether there is not something about private morality which is incompatible with successful cultivation of state-craft. What is true in that direction is that there is probably something about ordinary domestic felicity which is hostile to political success, for the simple reason that a man with a family to live with, and probably to support, can give only a divided attention to politics, and politics is a game which demands the concentration of the whole man. The most successful politicians of recent times, with some exceptions, have been bachelors, childless married men, and husbands whose homes were not happy. Celibacy

is at least as desirable in a politician as in a priest, the main difference being that, whereas it is useful to a priest as long as he is a priest, there may come to a politician a time when the storm and stress period of his career is so distinctly over, that he might as well get married as not.

Apart from politics and its professors, there are several reasons why principles are more apt to appear as a substitute for morals than to accompany them. For one, a man whose daily walk is discreet, and who behaves wisely and knows it, acquires confidence in his instincts, and is reasonably well satisfied that he does about the right thing, and that his conduct in future is likely to be as correct as it has been in the past. A principle is a fixed opinion, but your moral man, who has confidence in his habits, is apt to be guided very much more by them than by his opinions. A consequence of which often is, that his habits gain in strength until they get undesirably powerful, and his opinions grow vague for lack of practical demonstra-

tion. The more fixed his moral habits become, the more instinctive grows his behavior, and the less occasion he has to reason as to what is right or wrong, or to develop opinions into principles.

But with the man of no morals it is very different. Realizing his large potentiality for loose behavior, recognizing the unreliability of his instincts, and knowing that such habits as he has are mostly bad, he feels the uncertainties of his anchorages, and the great need of having something sure to tie to. Whatever worse things he may do, he determines that at least he will approve the better. A sinner he may be, but not an unprincipled sinner. He will know right from wrong anyhow, whether he acts upon what he knows or not. Prompted by such necessities, he pays attention to his opinions, taking care to hold those most approved, to hold them continuously, and to support them by the best arguments obtainable. The fact that he does not permit his behavior to affect his principles, or *vice versa*, frees him from many embarrassments that would

be incident to a different system. The consequence is that his principles increase in height and splendor, until the man of mere morals, hearing him hold forth, feels his knees knock together at the thought of his own inferiority.

If anyone doubts that it works this way, a convincing illustration is found in a general comparison of men with women. Women are absurdly superior to men in their morals, but only an adventurous disputant would deny that men have stricter and more definite principles.

XVII

A POET AND NOT ASHAMED

A POET AND NOT ASHAMED.

NE characteristic of Tennyson that looms up large in the figure of him that is left to us, was his ability to take himself seriously as a poet. Since his death a story has been in circulation about the experience of a certain exceptionally favored young woman, who went off on a yachting trip with a small party of which Lord Tennyson and Mr. Gladstone were members. She said, or at least the newspapers reported her as saying, that though the trip was delightful it was not entirely free from friction, arising from Mr. Gladstone's propensity to talk in moments in which Lord Tennyson wished to recite verses. Indeed, the lady intimated that the solid day did not seem to Mr. Gladstone too long for him to talk through, or offer to

Lord Tennyson did not mind being a poet.

Lord Tennyson an unreasonably protracted space for the recitation of his own poems, and that it sometimes happened that the decks of the yacht were cleared of all the passengers except two, the old statesman at one extremity lost in an impassioned monologue of discussion, and the venerable bard rehearsing Tennysonian poetry at the other.

This may not be a true story at all, and very likely it is exaggerated even if there are facts to it, but whether fact or fiction it illustrates well-known characteristics of the two masters that it concerns. Tennyson never doubted that his verse was worth imparting. Wordsworth believed implicitly in himself as the greatest poet of his day, and suspected that his day was the golden age of all poetry. His public disputed his opinion for many years, but finally came two-thirds of the way over to his way of thinking. Tennyson also made up his mind pretty early in life that he was a poet and a great one. The evidence he submitted in support of that conclusion was less conflicting than Wordsworth's,

and the public was quicker in conceding that he was right. And having demonstrated that he was a poet, and chosen poetry for his vocation, he revered his office and stuck to it. He took his work seriously, and himself seriously as the man to whom it was appointed to do the work. Always and everywhere where he went as a man, he went as a poet too. He must have been a poet even to his valet. To him there was nothing more absurd in the figure of himself in a cloak and a slouch hat reciting his own verses on the deck of a yacht than there is in the presence of an archbishop in full canonicals doing his office in the chancel of St. Paul's. That a poet should be picturesque and poetical seemed no more a thing to smile at than kingliness in a king.

And the beauty of it was that he was right. By magnifying his office he dignified it, and gained dignity for himself as its fit administrator. His safety lay in his possession of the inestimable treasure of simplicity. He did not assume, he developed. He did not pose,

he simply behaved as he felt. His ideals were lofty, his thoughts were trained to clothe themselves in poetical images, and his conduct and bearing were simply the shadow of the inner substance. Neither were absolutely contemporaneous, but much about both had the imperishable quality which is never in the fashion and happily never out of it.

In this land and in these days we are apt to giggle at great offices. To our eyes the divinity that doth hedge a king appears full of holes. Wigs and laced-coats and high-heeled boots possess no illusions for us any longer, and perhaps we are somewhat too prone to extend our humorous disregard for such discarded trappings to the substantial superiority they were once designed to fit. We are so ready to make game of the poetical aspirations of poets generally, that ours are apt to choose to be beforehand with us, and extenuate the possible absurdity of their own aspirations by smiling deprecations before and after. Now that Walt Whitman is dead, no American would dare look and act like

a poet even if he felt or wrote like one. Our poets are somewhat too apt to be spruce gentlemen in patent-leather shoes, who make verses in such odd hours as they can spare from the serious concerns of life. And one cause of their being so is the reiterated suggestion of a stiff-necked generation, that a sincere poet who believes in his office and lives up to it is a more or less absurd creature, who owes us all an apology for not doing something more lucrative and really useful. We have talked that way about poets so long that it looks a little as though ours had finally come to believe us, and put their best energies into other work. It might be better for them, and for us too, if they would shut their eyes to our quirks and giggles, and pattern a little more after Tennyson, who chose to be a poet, and was that and nothing else, all his life, and without evasion, apology, or remorse.

But if the irreverent American humor has not developed without some corruption of precious ideals, it has much to

offer in extenuation of itself in the shape of smashed idols with clay feet, whose usefulness, if they ever had any, was long since past. One such fetish that, so far as this country is concerned, has had the foundations laughed quite out from under it, is that curious device for defeating the natural superiority of mind over matter, which was known as "the code." To be sure, "the code" got its death-blow as an American institution as long ago as when Aaron Burr's bullet put a nation in mourning. It has never really flourished since then, though it did linger on fitfully and obscurely until after the civil war. But some of the manners and methods that were originally tributary to it survived it, and it has been left to this generation to laugh them little by little into contemptuous disuse. Men still quarrel and still exchange blows in anger, but not only the notion that differences between "gentlemen" must be settled on the field of honor has clean gone out; but behavior which had some appearance of sense while that notion still held has finally

One good mark for American irreverence.

It has helped to kill "the code."

come to be estimated as the archaism that it is. The age of "rotten boroughs, knee-breeches, hair-triggers, and port," has not only past, but its works have so far followed it that in America persons who attempt to shape their conduct by the standards of that age merely find that an amused and smiling public credits them with "courtly bar-room manners," and sniggers at their discomfiture. The "gentleman" who has done another gentleman an injury is not considered any less a blackguard because he offers his victim "any reparation in his power." To run the injured man through the body, or perforate his vitals with lead, is so universally understood to be an indifferent justification of an offence, that a culprit who goes out of his way to suggest it in any overt dispute finds himself most uncomfortably in contempt of public opinion. So the public insult, which would once have had to be expunged with blood, has relapsed from its high estate of being a gentlemanly act into a mere loaferish breach of the peace, to be settled for in a police court.

The fatal defect in these discarded standards was that they were not democratic. They never promoted, or were intended to promote, the greatest good of the greatest number, but merely contributed to the exaltation of the few who aspired to be superior to rules that might be fit for the vulgar. Now and then someone stumbles across the contemporary stage who, from living too exclusively in some narrow club circle in Europe, or even here, has failed to appreciate the spirit of the age, and attempts in some juncture to shape his conduct according to the notions of gentlemanly behavior that obtained in London clubs as late as the days of George the Fourth. It is only by watching the absurd contortions of such unfortunates that we are able to realize the progress that has been made. Since the theory of justification by combat has been exploded, there seems to be no way in which a gentleman can be sure of keeping his sacred honor free from specks except by plain, ordinary, decent behavior, and respect for the rights of other

people. If he does wrong he cannot fight his way right. He simply has to repent and apologize, or take his punishment quietly according to the rules of the game. If he is injured and the law cannot help him, the best way for him is just to grin and bear it, and let time wreak its own revenges. To be sure, if the injury is desperate, and he resents it in hot blood, the law may excuse him ; but society has come to a point of sophistication where it is able to recognize that a man who endures is usually a stronger and a nobler creature than the man who gives reins to his temper. The notion that one's "honor" can be damaged by the action of another person is pretty generally obsolete. Brag is not so good a dog as he was. Bluff will not go so far. The code that regulates in these days the manners of the highest and most influential type of American gentleman is actually to be found in the New Testament. The Christian standard of conduct is respected consciously or unconsciously in the clubs as well as in the churches. To

forgive one's enemies (or at least to let them alone), and to do as one would be done by, have always been good sense, and in these days by some miracle of grace they seem to be getting to be good form too. But perhaps we ought not to wonder at it, since to the discriminating observer the other way is so hopelessly absurd, and this age of publicity is necessarily an age of critical discrimination too.

XVIII

SOME CHRISTMAS SENTIMENTS

SOME CHRISTMAS SENTIMENTS

RECEIVING is traditionally such a poor thing compared with giving, that there is a prevailing tendency to take a discouraged view of it, and not to make a proper effort to make of it as good a thing as possible. It is capable of development into a very pleasant accomplishment, however better ones there may be; and this much may be remembered in its favor to start with, that it is the complement of giving, and an indispensable incident thereto, so that if we were wholly out of patience with it on its own account, we must still, out of a reasonable regard for the golden rule, take our turn at it, or else forego the counter-practice. It would be a mean person, certainly, who should seek to gobble up all the blessings that

The right idea about receiving.

givers enjoy, and dodge all the pains and difficulties of receivers.

From the receiver's stand-point all gifts may be divided into things that we want and things that we don't want. It takes no particular skill or grace to receive things that we want; but as, in times of general giving, like Christmas, the gifts we get are for the most part things that we don't want, that branch of receivership is worth attention. The two ordinary reasons for not wanting things are the vulgar one that they do not strike us as intrinsically desirable, and the more complex reason that we don't want to receive them from the particular giver. A general remedy applicable to reluctances due to either of these causes is, to keep strenuously in the mind the happiness of the giver in giving. Remembering that, you are delighted with a trifle from someone you love, because it makes you happy to have been even passively instrumental in procuring him the happiness of giving; applying the same principle, you can accept ever so costly a gift from

someone for whom you care little without any irksome sense of obligation, since, of course, the giver had the best of it any way, and it is a great deal kinder and more generous to sacrifice one's personal inclinations and accept, than to refuse. Remember persistently that by receiving with due grace you secure to another person a desirable form of happiness.

The very essence of successful receiving is to rise superior to the sense of obligation. The purpose of a gift, from the giver's point of view, is to make the receiver happy. But obligations are apt to be irksome, and the receiver who suffers one to weigh on him, meanly permits the giver's intentions to be frustrated, and the whole value of the transaction to be destroyed. Appreciation is what is wanted. To appreciate is a generous emotion, pleasurable to the receiver who can experience it, and highly agreeable to the giver. Both are blessed by it, and mutual love is quickened. Contrariwise, over obligations there is the trail of the serpent. Once recog-

nized they have to be paid off, and when recompense comes in, gift degenerates into mere barter, and the true spirit of giving exhales and disappears. Receivership that yields to the impulse to give something back is clumsy and inapt. Giving back is mere retaliation. If it is revengeful, it is neither pious nor philosophical, and the wise receiver will have none of it. But oftentimes it is merely the refuge of the inexperienced. A receiver who knows his business will no more resort to it than an expert horseman will hold on to the pommel of his saddle. The way to receive is to receive, not to retaliate.

To receive trifles from the rich and be charmed with them is a simple matter. To receive gifts of value from the poor and not be oppressed is a finer art, but on no account to be neglected. If Dives gives you a paper cracker, be as charmed with it as if it came from Lazarus ; but on no account fail, if Lazarus gives you an heirloom, to receive it with as much gayety and as little remorse as if it came from Dives, and you knew he

would not miss it. Nevertheless, don't feel obliged in your heart to undervalue Lazarus's heirloom, but be happy rather that Lazarus has had feelings toward you that have demanded so notable an expression.

After all, little children do it best. They are the superlative receivers, and it is because they are that we delight to give them things. They are frankly and delightfully appreciative. Obligations sit as lightly on them as air. They value their gifts simply by the pleasure they get out of them, and prefer a rag-baby to the deed of a brick house. They take a jumping-jack from Mary, the laundress, and a jewelled pin from Aunt Melinda Crœsus, without the least distinction of happy approval. The nearer we get to their guilelessness, the nearer we approach perfection in receiving, and in all the Christmas attributes besides.

What Christendom wants at Christmas time is simply to be happy. It wants the same thing all the rest of the year, but

when Christmas comes its habit is to make a special effort and gather, if it can, a special harvest of happiness from the plantings of the year. And where it is not used to being happy and does not really know how, it shows a pathetic willingness to learn, and even to assume an appearance of gayety that it does not really feel. Honest effort counts for a good deal in any pursuit, and where millions of people try to be happy and to furnish merriment for one another, a very considerable proportion meet with reasonable success. But in everything where there is a possibility of success there is also a hazard of failure, and it is no disparagement of a virtuous purpose to have a merry Christmas, to remember that effort which is misdirected, or attempts the impossible, or fails for any other reason, increases the bitterness of the resulting disappointment. Some good people will not have the heart to attempt any Christmas fun, or will fail in it in spite of all they can do. It is especially for their consideration that these remarks are intended.

The quest after happiness.

There was a person once—I dare say it would be nearer the truth to say there were a million people at various times—who, having sought after happiness with earnest and protracted strivings, finally gave up the quest and went about his other business. His conclusion, slowly and automatically derived from long periods of longing and resulting depression, was that he could not get in this world what seemed indispensable to his satisfaction, and that while it was within his powers to live decently and maintain an honest walk and conversation, happy he could never be, and it would not pay him to try any more. So he settled down with the feelings of one who has been unjustly deprived of his own, to go through the motions of living without regard to whether he liked it or not. But his mind, continuing to operate more or less independently, presently evolved the reflection that, while it was incumbent on every man to live his life and to live it as handsomely as he knew how, he was under no sort of obligation to enjoy it, since happiness was a mere

incident of mundane existence, and not at all a necessary condition or an absolute right. Now, merely to live decently whether you like it or not, is like walking along the street with your hands in your pockets ; whereas to feel obliged to gather a complete outfit of happiness that you cannot reach, is like running your legs off after an elusive butterfly. So great was this person's relief at the conclusion that happiness was not necessary, and that as a human being he was under no ethical bonds to secure it, that a weight left his mind and his spirits presently began to rise ; and though now and then he would lose his head and rush off after an impossible felicity, like a half-broken puppy who flushes an unexpected bird, when circumstances had duly thrashed him back into good behavior, he was able to return, not to his original gloom, but to the comparative cheerfulness of the emancipated state.

It makes a great difference in one's feelings about happiness whether he accustoms himself to regard it as a luxury,

like a million dollars or a yacht, which some men have and more don't; or as a comparatively indispensable endowment, such as a nose, which it is a sort of reproach to a man to be without. The instinctive appetite for it is, like hunger and thirst, a wise provision of nature, and designed to incite a salutary degree of effort; but it is quite as capable of abuse as the other appetites, and needs the same sort of control; so that whoever feels that he must have so much happiness every day, whatever happens, has reached a point where a period of total abstention is likely to do him good.

There are some stars that we cannot see at all when we look straight at them, but which become visible when we look a little to one side. So there are things that we cannot get when we try directly for them, but which presently fall into our laps if only we try hard enough after something else. Everybody knows it is that way with happiness. Make it a primary object and it leads you a doubtful chase; but ignore it in the rational

pursuit of something else, and presently you may find it has perched unnoticed on your shoulder, like a bird whose tail has felt the traditional influence of salt. So, of course, the very first essential to the achievement of happiness of any durable sort is to rise above the necessity of being happy at all. It may be conducive to this sort of achievement to remember that great spirits in all times have found in their own involuntary discontent a spur to exalted endeavor. Columbus had low spirits. Socrates and the judicious Hooker had Xantippes. Neither Lincoln, nor Balzac, nor Carlyle were happy men, but they put saddle and bridle on their own depression, and rode it under whip and spur into immortality.

But let nothing herein set forth induce any person to trifle with or undervalue any present happiness of which he may already hold the fee. It is very pleasant to have, and often very wholesome, and as long as it can be kept pure and sweet it is a lamentable blunder not to cherish it. Nor should anything

herein dissuade anyone from making a special effort after a particular lot of Christmas happiness. Only, worthy people who do make that effort are counselled to aim a little to one side of the mark, that their chance of a bull's-eye may be the greater. And the practical application of that advice, as everybody knows, is just to aim to make the other people happy, and trust to getting a share incidentally for one's self.

XIX

FEATHERS OF LOST BIRDS

FEATHERS OF LOST BIRDS

APROPOS of successful achievement, it has been said that those who succeed are those who go on after they are tired. The observation bears a family likeness to the one about genius being the capacity for taking infinite pains, and both amount simply to this, that the people who arrive are those who don't have to stop until they get there. To many of us it happens that there are bits of thought—sometimes they are bits of verse—that come into the mind when it is too tired to follow them up. It can just grasp them and go no farther. Such waifs are like the feathers that enthusiastic little boys who chase chickens on the farm find in their hands when the bird that they have almost run down gets away.

Cuvier, they say, could construct a whole skeleton from a single bone ; but it isn't told even of him that he could fix up a whole chicken from a few tail-feathers. Nevertheless, these intellectual relics are not to be wholly despised. Feathers that do not assume to be complete birds may still have a secondary sort of merit as feathers.

An odd lot of such strays, that turned up the other day in the corner of a drawer, included some *pennæ* that in hands entirely great might have come to something. One that seems to have been begotten of an inquiry into the grounds of contemporary renown makes such an appearance as this :

> So mixed it is, a body hardly knows
> If fame is manufactured goods, or grows.
> Douce man is he whose sense the point imparts
> Where advertising ends and glory starts.

Another grasp of plumage, gleaned, it would seem, in another chase after this same bird, disclosed this :

> And here the difference lies, in that, whereas
> What a man did was measure of his glory

In those gone days, now gauged by what he has
  He reads his title clear to rank in story.

The patriot lives, obscure, without alarms ;
  The poet, critics tell us, smoothly twaddles.
The patent-tonic man it is who storms
  The heights of noise, and fame's high rafter straddles !
Soap is the stuff—

With the rest of that last broken feather the bird in the hand became the bird in the bush. In the next lot :

No saint's physiognomy goes to my soul
Like the features that beam from that brown aureole—

suggests a quest after some female bird ; and this also seems to belong to the same theme :

More welcome than shade on a hot summer day
Is the shadow she casts when she's coming my way.
You can see she's a goddess ! Just look at her walk !
I own I adore her : there's bones in her talk !
Defend me from virgins whose talking is tattle,
Whose ears are mere trash-bins, whose tongues merely rattle ;

Whose brains are but mush, and their judgment a
sieve—
Invertebrate discourse is all they can give.
What profits mere beauty where intellect fails?
Oh, give me the woman whose mind will hold
nails!

That was quite a grasp of plumage, to be sure.

When the tennis-ball skims by the fault-finding net

is an odd feather from some fleet male bird, perhaps, who got easily away.

Not as dry as vast Sahara,
Just a sand-bank in July,

suggests a parched throat, and seems masculine too; and so does the sudden terminal curve of

One cannot be a dying swan
Offhand.

It seems as if there might still be fun enough in some of the birds that shed these things to pay for another chase, if only one could get sight of them.

The worst of these fowl, though, is that the best feathers and the longest legs seem to go together. It takes quick steps and a power of endeavor to catch ostriches.

XX

OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE

OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE

MY brother Mundanus and I, having baffled for the moment the penury that habitually suppresses our noble rages, dined together the other night at Delmonico's. After we had well eaten and pretty adequately drunken, my brother's emotions being stirred, he lifted his voice in reproachful protest at certain untoward flukes of fortune to which it seemed due that he and I had been barred out from the large possibilities of a life of luxury and possible pride, and restricted to the more meagre chances of laborious virtue. There was our grandfather, that thrifty and sagacious merchant, whose annual accumulations were of such a satisfactory size for so many successive years. If only his talent for investing money had equalled his ability to make it, what an

Mundanus and I,

edifying variety of roses would have bordered our pathway through life. Drinking with decorous respect to this gentleman's memory, my brother recalled an incident, to us the most pathetic in our grandfather's career. It happened rather more than sixty years ago. A succession of prosperous seasons had swelled his bank balance to unusual proportions. In his quest for an investment he learned of the budding promise of a Western town named Chicago. His mind dwelt upon it until he finally converted fifty thousand dollars into portable assets and travelled out to look at the ambitious Western place, determined, if he liked its appearance, to buy himself a collection of its corner lots. Alas! he found the town was swampy, and he caught cold there, and brought his assets home again, and presently put them with divers others into woollen mills, some of which burned down, and others after a time hung fire, and were sold at a grievous valuation just before the war broke out and made the everlasting fortunes of their purchasers.

though victims of a series of calamitous mischances,

At this harrowing reminiscence a tear ran down my brother's nose and fell into his champagne ; but restraining his feelings, he went on to recall how one or two decades later, our father, at that time a vigilant young attorney in Gotham, had formed a favorable opinion of the tract known as Murray Hill, and, borrowing a convenient sum of money, had purchased some acres of land in it, intending to hold them for future possibilities. But in a year or two, having a salutary horror of debt, he took counsel of precaution, and sold his land again and bought back the notes he had given for the purchase money. Which of the contemporary Crœsi owned the lots now my brother did not know, nor did he care to learn.

Coming down still another generation, my brother recalled the time when, not many years ago, he and I were solicited to share the ownership and fortunes of a journal whose infant soul was just on the point of fluttering into life. But, mindful of the mortality statistics of infant journals, we withheld our hands

and stayed where we were. Alas again! That infant throve prodigiously, and now its erstwhile anxious owners rejoice in town and country domiciles and invigorate their energies behind fleet quadrupeds on the Riverside drive. But my brother and I still dwell in modest hired tenements, and rely upon the street-cars for our transportation.

Seeing that these reminiscences seemed to have a depressing effect upon my brother's spirits, I hastened to suggest to him such consoling considerations as came into my mind. I reminded him, in the first place, that inasmuch as we and our fathers had lived in times of prodigious industrial development, such opportunities as we and they had missed had been the common lot of their and our contemporaries, and it was the exception to find a man born to fair possibilities in life who could not recur in his family annals to just such chances of being very rich as he had recalled. I told him of the perennial despondency with which my friend Robinson looked back to a day

are convinced that we prefer

when a friend of his had come to him with a handful of Dhudeen & Popocatapetl mining stock which he had entreated him to purchase at eight dollars a share. But Robinson being a prudent man, had declined, and year after year since then had watched the gradual uprising of that D. & P. stock, until each of those eight-dollar shares was now represented by certificates readily marketable at two thousand dollars.

I went on to remind him that if our grandfather had bought those corner lots in Chicago, our family, which is large and not of an especially frugal temperament, would have tried very earnestly to live up to the possibilities of life which such a purchase would eventually have opened. One thing I thought worth mentioning was, that if our father had inherited such a great fortune he would not have found time to raise so many children, and my brother and I might never have been born, or might have died in infancy from some costly foreign fever. I reminded him, too, that our sisters would doubtless

have married counts or possibly spendthrift dukes, and would have lived abroad at great expense to the estate, and our older brother, who has a prejudice against work as it is, would undoubtedly have enjoyed life in a manner that would have made necessary some heavy mortgages; so that it was easily possible that we would have found ourselves, at our age, no richer than we are now, and much less capable both of earning a living and of living on such incomes as we could earn.

My brother demurred gently at my gloomy estimate of the demoralizing tendencies of wealth, but I continued. I admitted that if our father had held on to his Murray Hill lots, the property might have lasted our time; but I reminded him that in that case we should now have been middle-aged men who had experienced expensive pleasures and eaten and drunk rather too much for our good for at least twenty years. Our characters would have been feebler for lack of most of the effort and self-denial we have practised during that

to be ourselves as we are,

period; the money we had spent would be gone, and we would have detriment rather than benefit to show for it. The pleasure we had had, being past, would be of no value to us at all, and would impair rather than increase our abilities to enjoy in the future. A continuance of the sort of life we had been leading would not be affirmatively pleasurable, but merely a necessary condition of tolerable existence. If we had had children, we should be apprehensive of the effect of our examples on their welfare; but the chances were that we should be childless clubmen, with shining scalps, and just beginning to be disturbed by ominous twinges in our great toes.

As to that last chance my brother had alluded to, of our gaining a competence by our own sagacity and good luck, that seemed to me to offer a more reasonable opening for regret. Nevertheless I explained to him that, even if we had been in easy circumstances for only eight or nine years, we should not have been quite the same men that we were, nor would our possible gains have

rather than as we might have been.

been unattended with losses. In my own case I was sure, for example, that a lucky stroke ten years ago would have made such a difference in my associates that I never should have fallen in with my present wife. My children, in consequence, if I had had any children, would have had different colored eyes and hair, and would have been different children altogether. I could not think with equanimity of myself as married to a person, however estimable, who is to me in fact an entire stranger; or as the father of a young brood with whom, as things have gone, I have no acquaintance, and in whom I take only a remote and dispassionate interest. The man I might have been, I said, is as much a stranger to me as the Prince of Wales. The man I am — that I have worked over, and endured, and sat up nights with—is inextricably associated with my most intimate concerns. For better or worse, I would rather go on with him as he is than change him for a richer, or even a better man, developed on different lines, under different conditions, and

living with a wife and children that belong, as it is, to somebody else.

"As for you," I continued, "not being married, you are not affected by all the considerations that influence me. But if you had made a lucky hit ten years ago you probably would have married; and when you consider the various chances of matrimony, including the cost of children's shoes and the propensity of male offspring to go to the dogs, are you sure that you would dare to shift blindfold out of the shoes you occupy now into those of the man you might have been if you had had better luck?"

My brother sniffed a little, but very gently. I think my arguments impressed him somewhat; but his philosophy is a trifle less ascetic than mine, and it is only on clearer days than common that he can fix his gaze upon the promised land intensely enough to drive the flesh-pots of Egypt out of his head. He may still be mourning in his heart over those corner lots in Chicago. I don't know. But even if my arguments failed

to have a convincing effect upon him, there are some hundreds of thousands of other vainly regretful Americans with whom possibly they may find more favor.

XXI

CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL VIEWS OF MAJOR BRACE

CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL VIEWS OF MAJOR BRACE

IF there is a thing I have set my heart on," observed Major Brace, at one minute before cocktail time on Saturday afternoon, "it is that when my last hour begins to strike I shall have a comfortable and interesting departure. Under what circumstances a man shall be born into this world of doubtful compensations, it does not lie with him to determine. He cannot select his parents or his physician, and even his own deportment is a thing outside of his volition. But how he shall be married and how he shall die are matters that it should fall to him to regulate. A man ought to be married cheerfully and in good company. However he may feel about it personally, he should remember that marriage is

commended by the church, and that the state makes a point of its encouragement. Whatever personal misgivings he may have about it he should put aside when it comes to the point, and adorn his brow (figuratively) with garlands and throw just as penetrating a glamour of individual cheerfulness over the scene as it lies in his power to diffuse. A man at his own wedding must just rub out of his mind those texts about man that is born of woman being liable to discomforts as the sparks fly upward, and as to how all our years over seventy are labor and sorrow and don't pay. *Nunc bibendum* and *pulsandum tellus* are the right sentiments for him, and his frame of mind should correspond with them. For it is his duty to alleviate the terrors of matrimony and so to conduct himself that other youths taking note of his behavior may find encouragement therein.

As to some possible terrors of death.

"Now the terrors of death" (*one! two! three! four! five! ping!* "Martini cocktail, please") "are not to be compared with those of matrimony, and it must be a simpler thing to die hand-

somely than to be creditably married. Moreover, though men may need encouragement to get married they can all be trusted to die, whether anyone shows them how or not. So a dying man's example is not so important a matter, and it is entirely reasonable for him to hope that in the arrangements that are made for him to expire, his own personal comfort may be the first consideration. I suppose we have all figured on our last feelings and our last words. Of course, if a man falls down an elevator shaft, or is run over by the cars, or dies violently or in severe pain, that spoils it all, and his preliminary arrangements are so much wasted time. But if he dies comfortably in bed and in good spirits, it is going to make a difference to him who is there to see him off. Of course no one wants hilarity at such a time, but courage, gumption, and serenity are as pleasant at life's close as at any point in its duration. The great point is that you don't want a lot of people around that you have got to entertain. When you cast your lingering

look behind, you want to see only such people as have made it easier for you to live, and not too many of them. They are the sort who will make it easier for you to die. You don't want anyone to be pleased, neither would you have anyone distressed. Above all things you want to be quit of people who are thinking too much about their own behavior to care anything about yours; of people who want to make formal remarks suitable to the occasion; of people of large experience, which, they think, qualifies them to be professional extinguishers; of all persons, however estimable, whose presence is a constraint upon you; of people who want to repeat *their* favorite Bible texts to you, when your mind is already running on your own.

"For myself such misgivings as I may feel about the nature of my last moments are largely due to my conviction that when my aunt Samantha hears that I am on my last legs, she will take the first train for my bedroom. And from the time she gets there, and sits down on the edge of the bed, all the comfort

will be gone out of the proceedings. She will want to run the entire show, and she will run it as if it were a dime display that went by clock-work. Samantha's effect on humor is that of chloride of lime on a smell. It is impossible to talk anything but commonplace where she is in earshot. What my last words will be if she is there——But she shan't be there. I won't tolerate it. If she comes I shall just say, 'Please give me those trowsers.' And I will excuse myself and come down and die at the club.

Of people who forgive one's past.

"I think that I could get along," continued the Major, as he twirled again the protruding tip of the little bell on the table at the club, "if it were not for the people who are willing to forgive my past. They are an unremittent source of worriment to me. They are constantly at work undermining the standard of worthlessness that I have set for myself, and loading me up with new purposes, the fulfilment of which is utterly beyond any possibility that I contain. If people—(Oh, bring me, etc.)—if peo-

ple only had gumption enough to remember that a man's past is nine-tenths of all there is to him, and that to forgive his past is only another way of knocking him on the head and preparing his remains for burial, perhaps some of my dear friends would learn to have more compunction about forgiving me.

"I resent the idea that because I spend only a couple of hours a day in an office, and get up late mornings, and go to bed late nights, and earn no money, and consume certain judicious quantities of alcohol and tobacco every day, my life is a failure, my habits a failure, and my past a thing to be persistently forgiven. Why, bless your heart, I like my past. If it had been different, these simple pleasures that make life fairly profitable to me would fail to satisfy me. For example, if I had formed habits of work I should be a slave to them, like all the other workers. Work gets hold of men as opium does, until the time comes when the amount they must take every day to keep them reasonably contented is more than their strength can stand.

When they reach that point they drop. You read of cases of it every day ; of men upon whom this fierce work-habit grew with all its attendant desires and ambitions, until they fell in their tracks with the harness on them. They had no particular fun ; they were of no particular use to their friends ; they were just the hired men of society whose business it was to earn money to pay for things that people wanted to sell to them. As long as they were short of money it was well enough for them to toil, because, you know, you must have some money in this world if you are to have any comfort. But when once their accumulations were adequate to support them, their past became a hindrance and a burden to them—something really fit to be forgiven, if possible, and got rid of at any cost. For, you see, it was simply a task-master, forbidding them to stop work and threatening them with misery, and even a premature death, if they altered their habits.

"Why, such a past as mine—(Thank you ; put it there)—is a possession of

inestimable value to a man who can afford it. It is so easy to live up to, so patient, so forgiving, so encouraging, and exacts so little. A man who has lived at high pressure must go at high pressure till his boiler bursts, but we low-pressure chaps slide along year after year, burning no great amount of fuel, not hauling many cars to be sure, but running so smoothly and with so little fuss that, when we do finally bring up, no one is inconvenienced and we hardly know it ourselves.

"It is a fact that I have always had serious compunctions about doing very much, particularly for other people, for fear of the monstrous inconvenience society in general, and my dependents in particular, might be put to when I died. You know how it is; when one of those hustling gentlemen who habitually crowd ten days' work into every week throws up his hand there is a wail of despair. All his womenfolks are disheartened, and the men look at one another and groan and say: 'My gracious! I wonder who is going to take up Jones's

job!' No one takes any comfort at his funeral. The mourners are ashamed of him for letting up, and twitch their shoulders nervously in dread of the weight of some of his burdens. It is a dreary business all around.

"But just you wait and see what a pleasant, cheerful episode it will be when I go. There will be—at least I hope there will—just a proper amount of we-could-have-better-spared-a-better-man sort of regret. Men will say: 'So Brace is gone. What a worthless old creature he was; and yet, somehow, he was handy to have about!' A good many people will come to the funeral, I think, partly out of an affectionate habit and partly because it will be a pleasant funeral with no broken hearts in it, and no horrid incubus of responsibilities perched up on the coffin and peering around among the mourners for a pair of suitable shoulders to shift itself upon. Nothing but my past enables me to look forward to such a funeral as that; and to forgive my past, you see, is simply to discredit all my future. I

wish people might not forgive it any more.

Of family parties.

"If there is a social function that I despise with embittered animosity," broke out the Major again after a pause of grumbling meditation, "it is the family party. I hate it not less for what it includes than for what it leaves out. It is a notorious fact that neither consanguinity nor ties of marriage afford ground for the imputation of congenial social qualities. That I should feel an interest of a certain sort in the nephew of the aunt of my wife, or the sister-in-law of the mother-in-law of my stepson, may be reasonable. I am ready to go bail for them when they are arrested for crime, to be a witness to their wills, and possibly to go on their bonds in a reasonable amount when that is a condition precedent to their profitable employment. But why I should be huddled together with these worthy people for purposes of festivity I fail to discern.

"I have been to a wedding. My cousin Sally got married. I like my

cousin Sally a good deal, and I would have been glad to have fun at her wedding; but—good heavens!—my cousin is wearing black edges on her writing-paper this spring, and it was held that it ought to be a private wedding, with no one but the family. Sally was there; her father and mother; her three brothers and their wives; the bridegroom; his father and mother; his grandmother; his three sisters and the husbands of two of them; the brothers of the two husbands of the groom's sisters and their wives; the parents-in-law of Sally's brothers and their families; first and second cousins, uncles, aunts, and step-relatives of the contracting parties.

"Gracious! It made me feel as if I had got mixed up with the Mafia, there was such a dreadful sense of conspiracy and a common, dreadful purpose about. There were people enough of merit there, but they were not grouped on a fit system. Nobody's crowd was complete. Everyone who had friends in his society gang with whom he liked to consort on such an occasion was separated

from two-thirds of them, and had relatives served up to him instead. I wanted to drink champagne. I always do at weddings when I have any feeling for the 'parties,' but the gloom was so deep on me that I dared not begin. At last I got Jack Robinson off in a corner, away from everybody that we were related to, and we guzzled monotonously and without enthusiasm until it was decent to go home. I tell you, family parties are a baneful business ; bad for those who are excluded and worse for those who are not. I cannot think of any end they serve which is important enough to warrant them.

"I heard of another informal wedding the other day. The bride invited a score of friends to dinner. The groom was of the party, so was the clergyman, and the wedding and the black coffee came about the same time. Now that was something like.

Of gossip.

"There was imparted to me lately, under due exactions of secrecy," the Major went on, as the bell quivered

once more under his impetuous finger, "a tremendous story, involving facts bearing in a highly interesting manner upon the moral characters of sundry contemporaries. I rarely know any startling gossip except what I am able to glean from the newspapers, and I was not hunting for recondite facts of a personal nature when the tale I speak of came to my knowledge. I was utterly flabbergasted by it. Where I had conjectured my informant had ascertained; but her certainty far outran my suspicions, for where I had read indiscretion her knowledge joined to mine brought out guilt in large exclamatory lettering. I was astonished at the story, and I have been scarcely less astonished at its effect upon my inner consciousness. At first it filled me up to the exclusion of all other thought, and threatened to get itself unreasonably important for the reason that the knowledge of it left me with nothing else to say. Since then there has been some natural shrinkage in it, due to the action of time and the impact of affairs, and with careful discre-

tion I have talked scallops out all around the edge of it (much as children nibble around a flat cake of maple sugar), leaving untouched the substantial central tale which I am in honor bound not to reveal.

"The reason I mention it here is not to tantalize any one with the shadow of a story whose substance is locked up, but for the sake of discussing whether it has paid me to know this story at all. There have been inconveniences about it, the wear and tear of keeping it to myself, and the disagreeable variation in my sentiments toward some of the persons whom it concerned. It did not make me think better of any one absolutely, though my estimates of one or two persons relatively to one another have shifted. I find, however, that I am ahead on the whole transaction, because, while I am not so closely attached to the victims of the tale as to be distressed by it, it comes near enough to me to make my interest in it very lively and exhilarating. Without the least desire to judge these contemporaries, I find

myself in a slightly better position to form just opinions as to the merits or faults of their future behavior. Knowledge is power, and power is pleasant, even though it is limited in its possibilities of good. I have not yet come to the point where I would unknow that tremendous story if I could.

"Of course, if I could undo the facts of the story I would gladly do that. What disappoints me is the apparent defect in my benevolence, which, the facts being unalterable, makes me prefer to know them, though apparently they cannot in any legitimate fashion promote my happiness. Can I console myself with the pretence that I love truth too much to part with such a piece of it? I fear not. I fear that the love of truth has little to do with the case. I fear I must conclude that unregenerate man takes a real pleasure in being fully abreast of the times in the knowledge of his neighbor's misdeeds, for the reason perhaps (for one reason) that he is continually comparing himself in an automatic sort of way with his neighbors,

and information that makes him think worse of them makes him think better, by contrast, of himself. 'Certain it is,' as Thackeray assures us, 'that scandal is good brisk talk,' and that 'an acquaintance grilled, scored, devilled, and served with mustard and cayenne pepper excites the appetite.' Whether it is also true, as he goes on to aver, that 'a slice of cold friend, with currant jelly, is but a sickly, unrelishing meat,' is another matter, and I am not going to admit it; at least not on this drink."

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